A Fresh Approach

TO

THE HISTORY OF KASHMIR

(Source material mainly drawn from
the Kashmiri Language)

Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din

A Fresh Approach

TO

THE HISTORY OF KASHMIR

CONTENTS

		Page
	Preface	
I	The Identity of the Kashmiri People	1
II	The Antiquity of the Kashmiri Language	17
III	Wrong Identification of Fictitious Place-names given in *Rajatarangini*	39
IV	*Wontabavan*	63
V	*Wontabavan* (continued)	81
VI	The Green Culture of Kashmiris	83
	Index	88

THE IDENTITY OF THE KASHMIRI PEOPLE

Kasheer, known to outsiders as Kashmir, has attracted attention from the dawn of civilisation. Anyone of merit would take great pride in associating his name with this country. An historian would like to make mention of it, a soldier would want to conquer it, a poet would sing in praise of its beauty, and a religious-minded person would like to conform it to his own beliefs. In the process, Kashmir became more a legend than a reality, a paradise on earth, and not just a piece of territory inhabited by people, good and bad, as any other peoples on the surface of the earth. The legend attracted to this land in the past, as now, curious visitors from far and wide, some of whom did not find the country as beautiful as they had imagined it would be. Many of them were even dismayed to find that its people were not gods, nor even holy fools who could either be worshipped or taken for a ride. They, therefore, reviled everything about Kashmir, particularly its people.

Birth of the Legend:

It is not known when the legend took birth, but it is certain that Kashmiri Sanskrit authors were the first to commit it to writing. Thus, *Nilmata Purana*[1] has an interesting tale to narrate about the creation of the country and its people.

"O best amongst the kings, the goddess *Uma* is the same as Kashmira. What was formerly an enjoyable, heart-enrapturing lake for six *Manvantras* since the beginning of the *Kalpa*, became a beautiful territory in this *Manvantra*," said *Vaisampayana* to *Janamejaya* in reply to his question as to why a woman was crowned as the ruler of Kashmira.

With this verse unfolds the tale itself which may be briefly narrated as follows:

On the bank of this heart-enrapturing lake, lotus-eyed *Indra* was once sporting with his consort *Sachi*. On this beautiful goddess fell the eye of the Daitya-Chief named *Sangrha*. The Daitya-Chief became subject to passion and desirous of carrying away *Sachi*, and in his excitement discharged semen into the lake.

The child born out of the evil-minded *Sangrha*'s discharged semen, was brought up by the *Nagas* and was called *Jalodbhava* (the water-born).

Jalodbhava propitiated the god *Pitamha* with a penance and obtained from him the boon of immortality in water, magical powers and unparalleled prowess. Having obtained the boon, he began devouring human beings who lived in various countries.

At this very time, *Kashyapa*, the sage, who was travelling around the whole world in connection with a holy pilgrimage, reached *Kenakhala*, where *Nila*, the king of the *Nagas*, met him and narrated to him the tale of atrocities committed against human beings by the water-born demon.

After hearing this tale of woe, *Kashyapa* alongwith *Nila* went to the eternal world of *Brahma* and met there, *Vesudeva*, *Isvera* and *Ananta*, besides *Brahma*. To these gods he related the activities of *Jalodbhava*.

Then, all the gods and goddesses, including *Kesava*, *Hari*, *Hara*, *Yama*, *Agni*, *Varuna*, *Vayu*, *Kubera*, *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Saraswati*, *Devika*, *Narmada*, *Gomati*, and many others, went to wage war against the water-born demon.

However, on hearing the sound of the retinue of the gods, the evil-minded demon, knowing himself to be imperishable in the water, remained submerged.

The gods took up their positions on different mountain peaks. Then, the god *Janardana* said to *Ananta*: "Breaking forth Himalaya today with the plough, make soon this lake devoid of water." *Ananta* did what he was told, the water flowed forth hurriedly with

force. When the water of the lake was disappearing, the demon used his magical powers and created darkness all around.

Then, the god *Shiva* held the sun and the moon in his two hands and brought light to the world. When the darkness had vanished, *Hari*, with the power of *Yoga*, fought the demon and cut off his head.

After the fight was over, all the gods took their seats and *Kashyapa*, standing in front with joined hands, said to the boon-giver *Vishnu*, "O god, let this country be inhabited by human beings and be holy as well as charming." But to *Kashyapa*'s pleas, the *Nagas* put forth an objection and said, "O best among the sages, we would not live in the company of men." This enraged the sage, and in anger, he told the *Nagas* that since they had spoken audaciously, without paying regard to his words, they would have to dwell in the company of *Pisacas*. This was too much for the *Nagas*, because the *Pisacas* were over-powered by anger and knew nothing. *Nila*, thus, addressed *Kashyapa*, "We are ready to live always in the company of men. We would not live with the *Pisacas* who are cruel and who like cruelty."

Upon this, *Vishnu* intervened and said, "O *Nila*, the words of the sage will be effective for one *Caturyuga*. After that, you will live in the company of men only. Here the *Pisacas* will always become weak ... *Prajapati* is called K, and *Kashyapa* is also *Prajapati*. Built by him, this country will be called *Kashmira*."

Not historical narrative:

It is quite obvious that the tale is in no way intended as an historical narrative, but, instead, has been woven to put forth the religious beliefs of the narrator(s).[3] All the gods mentioned in the tale are Aryan, and while the *Nagas*, the serpents, have been accommodated in the assembly of sages and gods, the *Pisacas* are presented as non-human creatures "who are cruel and who like cruelty".

The tale, furthermore, reveals the pride of the narrator(s) in belonging to the country, obviously because of the superior sense of belonging to the community of gods and sages, as against inferior creatures, whom the god *Vishnu* recommended to dwell in the region.

The tale, naturally, had tremendous appeal for the Sanskrit authors whom we find on the literary firmament of Kashmir from the sixth century onwards. Their beliefs were the same, and they also thought themselves as not belonging to the community of either *Nagas* or *Pisacas*.

Kalhan:

One such great writer was Kalhan *(Kalyan)* who flourished in the twelfth century A.D. He composed a *Kavya* with the premise that time is an all-conquering power, and that man is governed by Destiny. This *Kavya* is famous, known by the name of *Rajatarangini* (the River of Kings). Unfortunately, the present writer does not know the Sanskrit language and is, therefore, handicapped in evaluating the real poetic genius of the master, but even in translations one can discern the artistic insight, the keen observation and varied experiences of the author. The wise sayings, the dramatic situations created to illustrate the theme and the deep understanding of men and women are startling as well as refreshing. Anyone who has had the good fortune to read *Rajatarangini* in its original Sanskrit will testify to the high intellectual calibre of its author.

But, alas, after his lifetime, the book fell into the hands of such people as were either less intelligent (and through their writing we know that they were so) or gullible, and they, ignoring its artistic excellence, began to call it "the history of the kings of Kashmir". This woeful process of misinterpreting a great creative work started (perhaps) with *Jonaraja* and was carried through the centuries to the present one, when Dr. Stein took upon himself the white man's

burden of interpreting for us the writings of one of our own authors.

In his excitement of reconstructing our history from 3100 B.C. onwards, he makes casual observations about the Kashmiri language,[4] wrongly identifies the place-names,[5] and to cap it all, invents decimal coinage[6] for us. In this misadventure, he has been helped on the one hand, by his ignorant subordinate *Kayasthas* (for whom Kalhan had nothing but contempt) and, on the other hand, by those who paraded as scholars and men of learning, but who were, in fact, self-seekers and job-hunters. *Rajatarangini* is one of such unfortunate books as are least read but oft quoted, and quoted only to misinform.

Anyway, a question may be asked, that if Kalhan wanted to write a *Kavya* just to put forth his theme, why did he choose kings and queens, some of them real, as his characters, and why did he assert that he had consulted earlier documents for the authenticity of his narrative? The answer is not impossible to seek. Any creative writer of whatever calibre knows that the choice of characters in a creative piece is always determined by the theme. In the present case, the theme that time was the all-conquering power would in no way be presented but through the kings, who were on the mundane plane, the only conquerors during the feudal age and in whose hands lay this worldly destiny of multitudes and countries. And since Kalhan was a great writer, he knew how to achieve credibility and how to make the narrative realistic "by alluding to sources", and by using the names of some of the real kings and queens.

Orbit of Research:

In the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, these Sanskrit works began to be taken as the source material for our history, if not the actual history, and thus an orbit was marked, within which the researchers had to work in order to construct the

history of Kashmir. We see, therefore, throughout the past centuries and particularly in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, almost all historians putting forth their views about the origin of the people of Kashmir within this narrow orbit. It was claimed that the *Nagas* were a race different to the *Pisacas*, and the Aryans a different and superior race which brought civilisation to the land. Consequently, no-one paid any attention to the word *Kashmira*, which was never accepted by the people inhabiting the land as a word belonging to their language. Instead, they continued and still continue to call it *Kasheer*, and themselves as *Káshiri*, and their language as *Káshir*. No-one even thought of the Sanskrit word *Mir* as standing for 'Mountain'. Even if the word *Kashmir* were the original name, it would mean the mountain of *Kash* and not the piece of land from which water was drained by *Ka*. We have other places, also, in the north like *Pamir* and in the south, *Barmir, Ajmir, Jaisalmir*, etc, where we do find mountains and not valleys from which water was drained by the sages.

Moreover, the word 'Kashmira' did not fit in the genius of the language spoken by the inhabitants of the land, and, therefore, remained throughout the ages as an alien word in contrast to the word 'Kasheer', which forms an integral part of the speech, and from which other grammatical forms like *Koshur, Kashiri* and *Kashir* are derived.

By taking the Sanskrit works as the source of Kashmir history, the genuine sources were neglected, and in the course of time became extinct, with the result that we are left with some mythological tales and legends, which can be interpreted in any way according to the religious beliefs of the writer.

Dr. Grierson:

It was Dr. Grierson who, for the first time, attacked the problem from a different angle. He undertook to study the language known as the Kashmiri language. Through his researches, he found the language 'evidently as a real form of speech, and not an artificial gibberish,[7] and that the language was not really a *Parakrit* in the usual sense of the word. It was a very ancient language, a sister and not a daughter of the form of speech which ultimately developed as literary Sanskrit'.[8]

Thus, Dr. Grierson gave to the *Pisacas* the credit for having a real form of speech and, therefore, for belonging to the human race and not to the race of goblins and demons who would be better subdued and annihilated. He also gave them the standing of a tribe, owing no allegiance to, and having but a distant connection with, the Aryan conquerors of India.[9] He concluded by saying that the language belonged to the Dard family, and the Dards must have lived a life of their own, distinct from any other branches of the Aryan race.[10] Significantly, he observes that they (the Dards) were identical with the *Nagas* who, according to Kashmir mythology were the aboriginal inhabitants of the Happy Valley.[11]

The orbit again:

Dr. Grierson's researches of the language reject the view expressed by Dr. Stein, that the Kashmiri language was not Sanskrit, but undoubtedly an *apabhramsa* dialect derived from it.[12] Instead, he gives it an independent existence by rightly claiming its origin from a different family. However, even he was bound by the orbit marked by Sanskrit authors, in the sense that he calls the *Dards* and the *Pisacas* two different branches of the Aryan stock. In other words, this means that, by whatever name you choose to call them, be it *Dards, Nagas* or *Pisacas*, they all belong to the Aryan race. But did they really belong to the race? Let us examine the question in a different light.

Burzahom Excavations:

Recent excavations at *Burzahom*, a site near Srinagar, have revealed certain finds which have been identified as relics of the Neolithic Age. The *Burzahom* people are claimed to have been pit-dwellers, and they had developed tools like the needle, the harpoon, the axe, etc. The dates of the *Burzahom* finds have been fixed at *circa* 2400 - 1500 B.C.[13] These finds reveal that the *Burzahom* man stitched his clothes, was a hunter and, therefore, fish- and flesh-eater, and would use wood by cutting it with the axe. Perhaps the axe was his war weapon, also.

With this material, though scanty, at our disposal, let us have a look at the Indus Valley Civilisation, which we are told flourished in northwestern India at about the same period, *viz circa* 2400 - 1750 B.C. It is being claimed that, before the influx of the Aryans, there existed a highly developed Dravidian Civilisation in rather more vast regions of northwestern India than had been previously included.[14]

Also, "besides *Burzahom*, the only other places where a few ground and polished stone axes are found are *Orangi*, not far from *Karachi, Mohanjo Daro* and *Sirkap* at *Taxila*".[15]

Now, the almost identical period of time of the *Burzahom* (*circa* 2400 - 1500 B.C.) and the Indus Valley Civilisation (*circa* 2400 - 1750 B.C.), the claim that the regions in which the Dravidian Civilisation flourished were more vast than included in it, and also the existence of a vital tool of the Indus Valley Civilization, all these facts do suggest some kind of relationship between the *Burzahom* and the Indus peoples. This suggestion is further reinforced by the statement made by Dr. Grierson, to the effect that "when dealing with the language of these countries (*Lehnda* and *Sindhi*), it has been seen that evident traces of this *Pisaci* influence exist at the present day".[16]

Still further, it is being said that the *Burzahom* man and the Indus Valley man belong to the same stock of race, and the claim has reportedly been upheld by anthropologists.[17]

Should we not, therefore, be justified in believing that before the influx of Aryans, the Valley, like other parts of northwestern India, was inhabited by the same people who are called *Dravads*? The similarities do suggest that.

The Aryans, it is said, when entering India, came in contact with the superior Dravidian Civilisation, which they sought to destroy by wholesale massacre of the local population, especially the men-folk, thus compelling them to migrate towards the South. While the *Dravads* carried whatever was left with them southwards, the Aryans could not annihilate their civilisation completely in the occupied region. It was, to a large extent, kept alive by the Dravidian women-folk whom the Aryans kept. From these women, they learnt the art of writing and also enriched their language.[18]

With the influx of Aryans into northwestern India, the Dravidian Civilisation came to a close by about 1750 B.C., but the *Burzahom* culture continued for a further period of about three centuries, which fact should suggest that Aryans entered into the Valley three centuries after their occupation of the Indus valley region. Here they again confronted their old enemies, whom they had conquered and put to flight towards the South. The confrontation was all the more serious, because the Valley dwellers would not leave home and hearth to migrate, as the escape routes had already fallen into hostile hands. They had, therefore, willy-nilly, to stay put and fight for their survival, which it seems they did. They were not, perhaps, subject to wholesale massacre, too, because during the three centuries' relationship through the Dravidian women-folk, the Aryans had mellowed towards these *Rakasasas* and "goblins", but they were not treated as equals either. Instead they were given a derogatory name "*Pisitasha*" (flesh devourers), which ultimately became *Pisacha*.

Who were the Dards?

The early inhabitants of Kashmir are variously referred to as (1) *Dards*, (2) *Nagas*, and (3) *Pisacas*. We are given to believe that the three words denote three peoples, who were different, if not ethnically, at least culturally. Dr. Grierson, while conceding that 'Ghalchah and Dard nations must have lived each a life of its own', hastens to record that they belonged to other branches of Aryans.[19] Similarly, *Pisacas* and *Nagas* are also considered ethnically Aryan. However, to my mind, and I may be wrong, all the three appellations, *viz Dard, Pisaca* and *Naga* denote one and the same people. The word 'Dard' points to the language of the people, while the word 'Nagas' to their religious beliefs, and the word 'Pisaca' to their food habits. Thus, these three appellations do not seem mutually contradictory.

The original inhabitants, who were the builders of the *Burzahom* Civilisation, were *Dards*, closely related to the Dravads of the Indus Valley. The word 'Dard' might be the corrupted form of the word 'Dravad'. They were serpent worshippers and their totem was the hooded serpent',[20] and therefore, called themselves with pride 'the Nagas'.[21] But, to their Aryan visitors, they were *Pisacas*, the flesh-devouring goblins. Would any nation, people or race, give itself such a humiliating name? Is it not invariably others who give such derogatory names to rival nations, peoples or race? The word 'Pisaca', being a derogatory name, could not have been given by any people to themselves.

The *Dards* in Kashmir were really flesh-eaters, because they could not be otherwise. During the long winter months, when hills and dales were covered by snow, it was not possible to get food derived from plants, and therefore, they had to subsist on animal food alone. That is why their earliest tools included the harpoon, which is still used for catching fish, and is known as *Naruts*!

Immortality of the Snake:

We do not know what actually were the *Naga* beliefs, but there is sufficient evidence to prove that they were serpent worshippers, and for them the serpent represented the highest being, or even a mystical creation. The serpent has been an object of worship in various ancient civilisations. Egyptians, too, are believed to have been serpent worshippers, and so were the Indus Valley Dravidians, who were possibly initiated into this form of worship by migrants from the Mediterranean region, which is said to have taken place somewhere near 2900 B.C.

From their folklore, Kashmiris believe even today that the snake is a different creature than is apparent. The snake, according to Kashmiri folk-belief, lives in the nether world in human form and has its own kings and queens. It sometimes visits the earth, coming up through a crevice in a freshwater spring. Therefore, every spring has a snake as its lord, out of which it might come in the dead of night, and drop a shining jewel from its mouth to drink milk if some is kept near the spring by any kind-hearted person. This kind-hearted person might be rewarded with the priceless jewel, which the pleased snake might leave behind.

It is of interest to note that there is no word in the Kashmiri language for 'spring',[23] and since all springs are believed to be guarded by snakes, therefore the springs are named after them. In course of time, the word *Naga* assumed the meaning of spring, while for snake a word from Sanskrit has been adopted, which is pronounced with phonetic variations, as '*Swarupn*'.

The snake can assume human form on Earth, and even fall in love with a human female. One such folk-tale, which ends in tragedy, is popular even today. The tale invokes sympathy for *Nagiray* (the Snake King) and his human beloved *Heemal* (the garland of *Jasmine*), whose love is frustrated by her kith and kin, because the lover was, in their opinion, of low caste.

The snake could attain immortality if no human gaze were to fall upon it for two millennia. By living for one thousand years

without ever having been seen by a human being, the snake could attain the status of *Shahamar* (the King Snake), and if it were able to avoid human gaze for yet another one thousand years, it would achieve the highest status of *Kulmar* (the all-Powerful) and become immortal.

Although these beliefs are fast dying now, yet the serpent is not considered a malevolent creature. A few years ago, two snakes were found near a busy road in Srinagar. The people promptly got milk in earthen dishes to feed them, and it began to be rumoured that the snakes would come out of their holes only at a particular time of the day. People began to throng the place just out of curiosity, or who knows with what beliefs which might still be living in their subconscious minds? There are different species of snakes in Kashmir, but the majority of them are poison-free.

In passing, it may be mentioned here, that Kashmiris, both Muslims and Hindus, abstain from eating fish found in freshwater springs, although they relish eating fish, particularly 'Kāshir Gad' (Kashmiri fish), a kind of fish found in Kashmir's rivers and lakes which, of course, is more tasty.

In our Dravidian beliefs, there might have been some relation between the serpent and the Shiva concepts. Even today, Shiva is represented with a snake around his neck. Since there is no mention of a god bearing this name in the *Vedas*, it should mean that the Aryans had no such beliefs, such as are attributed to the Shiva Cult. Thus it was in Kashmir that the fusion of *Dravad* (*Dard*) beliefs and those of Aryans took place, which, perhaps, gave rise to the unique philosophy called *Shaivism*. This is distinct from the South Indian *Shaivism*, although the basic concept of both is the same. The later *acharyas* of Kashmir *Shaivism* like Somananda, Utpaldeva and Abhinava Gupta, etc., who elaborated, and possibly developed, the philosophy in Kashmir, might have been well-versed with the *Vedas* and other Aryan beliefs. Therefore, there is

nothing to wonder about the presence of the Shiva concept in Kashmir.[24]

However, the snake that we find around the picture of the Shiva statue today belong to the cobra species. This should be the modern version of the snake. In ancient times, it was more a mythical creature than the real one. A snake-like monster - huge, batwinged and breathing fire - was conceived by the Mediterranean people, particularly Egyptians, as a symbol of the principle of evil, although the Greeks and Romans, at times, conceived the *drakonets* as beneficent powers - sharp-eyed dwellers in the inner part of the earth.[25] May be this concept travelled to our part of the world, and from here to the Far East, where it was accepted as a beneficent creature. The dragon continues to survive here to this day as a motif, and what is more significant, the Kashmiri language also has in its vocabulary many words which are said to have originally belonged to the Semitic family of languages.[26]

With all this in view, I think there is reasonable justification in concluding that the roots of the identity of the Kashmiri people will have to be found in much earlier civilisations than are otherwise being taken into account. Maybe, it is the bone and blood of the very ancient *Dravad* (whatever goes with it) Civilisation, which has survived as the ethnic or cultural core, and around which the present edifice has been built in collaboration with the Aryans, the Ionian Greeks, the Konkan Brahmans, the Gypsies and the Central Asians. The migrants had to attune their genius to this core, and get themselves absorbed and assimilated, when contributing towards the growth and vitality of this unique people, or else be condemned to remain aliens.

* * * * * * * * * *

REFERENCES

1. The *Vitasta Mahatmaya* believed to have been composed in the sixth century A.D.
2. This verse and the tale that follows have been taken from *Nilmata Purana,* edited and rendered into English by Dr. Ved Kumari, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Jammu University.
3. Having listened to the glorification of the *Vitasta,* one is freed from all sins, and having heard the whole of the *Nilmata,* one gets the merit of (the gift of) ten cows. (*Nilmata* 1451)
4. *Rajat* by Dr. Stein: Vol. II, pages 371-72.
5. Refer Wrong Identification of Fictitious Place-names given in *Rajat* by this writer.
6. *Rajat* by Dr. Stein: Chapter on Ancient Kashmiri coinage.
7. *Linguistic Survey of India* by Dr. Grierson: Vol. 8, Part 2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Rajat* by Dr. Stein: Vol. II, pages 371-72 .
13. Report: *Archaeological Survey of India.*
14. *Our Cultural Heritage* by Dr. Ishwar Topa.
15. *The History of Kashmir* by N K Bamzai: page 43.
16. *Linguistic Survey of India* by Dr. Grierson: Vol. 8, Part 2.
17. *Human Remains of Burzahom:* A.S.I., New Delhi.
18. *Buddhist India* by Raya Davids.
19. *Linguistic Survey of India* by Dr. Grierson: Vol. 8, Part 2.
20. C.F. Oldham quoted by Dr. Sarla Khosla in her book *The Buddhism in Kashmir.*
21. The following *Wana Wun* songs reflect love and respect for *Nagas*:

دوہ سہ دیوانے پیٹھو دو لو ناگو باسمتھ ڈوے امبرے امبرے

آغو روزی زلس مہربان بومبرے ناگس کو پینہ وول

22. Even today, Kashmiris, both Pandits and Musalmans, relish eating mutton prepared in delicious cuisine, on ceremonial and festive days.
23. *Pokhar* is the word for a very small spring, which is not credited with a snake as its guard.
24. M.L. Saqi in his article, *Lalded aur Shivmat* (Tameer, March-April 1984) has expressed wonder as to how Kashmiris (who according to him were the Aryans) could have learnt about Shiva.
25. *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*
26. List of such words said to have originally belonged to Semitic family of languages have been given in books by Messrs. Mohi-ud-Din Hajini, A.K. Rehbar, etc. Significantly, however, these words do not appear in the list published by Rabbi A. Avihail and A. Brin in *The Lost Tribes of Assyria,* page 89.
27. The origin of *Kash: Rof* can be traced to the *Konkan Dhalo* dance-songs. Mr Manoharrai Sardesai in *Indian Literature (Sahitya Academi)* No. 110, November-December 1985 writes: "*Dhalo* are folk-dance songs sung by women-folk on moonlit nights during the month of *Posh. Dhalo* starts from *punar* (night of the full moon) and continues for one full week. The dance, which has religious overtones, is always performed on the same consecrated spot called *Mand.* Women, attired in colourful sarees and bedecked with flowers, stand in rows facing each other and slowly move forward and backward. The movements slow at first, soon gather momentum. The songs are in *Ovi* form and are rich in images and rhythms.

II. The Antiquity of the Kashmiri Language

کأشر ستیتہ کأشری سأری
نتہ وأراءنکی حأران کاو

With the Kashmiri (language)
we are Kashmiri (nation)
or else disorderly crows in the wilderness.
(Amin Kamil, Poet)

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE KASHMIRI LANGUAGE

"To deny a people an education in their own language
is to treat them as a conquered people."

Kim Beazley

Kashur, the language of the Kashmiri people is, it seems, the survivor of the oldest speech in the region. The language has been described by early scholars of Sanskrit as *Paishachi*. Their biased references to the language, and the emotional attachment by some of the later scholars to such references, have obscured research on scientific lines, and thereby, the identification of different stages of the socio-political development of the Kashmiri people and their culture.

However, in the last decade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some European scholars took interest in the subject, and found that the Kashmiri language was a linguistic marvel, which "has been preserved through so many centuries only due to the inhospitable nature (of its home) and the hostile character of its speakers".[1]

The language was rightly placed in the family of the Dardic group of languages, and it was established that "the Dard languages, though belonging to the Indian branch, are not Sanskritic. There was found a gap between them and their true Sanskrit neighbours."[2]

Unfortunately, European scholars were not able to perceive the full wonder that was the Kashmiri language, because of two reasons; (1) that the *Burzahom* site of the pre-Aryan civilisation in Kashmir had not been discovered then, and (2) that their vision was limited by the concept of the so-called Standard Language prevalent then among linguists. At that time, perhaps it was not conceived that "Children who are born into homes of privilege, in the way of wealth, tradition or education, became native-speakers

of what is known to linguists as the Standard Language. Less fortunate children became speakers of the Non-Standard Language".[5]

Under the spell of this concept, they undertook to study the upper-class élitist dialect, which lead them to an extremely incorrect belief of the existence of Hindu-Kashmiri and Muslim-Kashmiri. Consequently, they did not always come to the right conclusion.[4]

I do not intend, in any way, to minimise the importance of the pioneering work done by such scholars as Shaw, Grierson, Bühler, and many others in this field. On the contrary, I want to place on record the gratitude of Kashmiri scholars and myself for all those eminent personalities in the field of linguistic science, particularly for Dr. Grierson, who made this language the subject of their study and whose efforts gave it its proper place in the family of world languages.

Yet it is a fact that, so far, the language has not been studied in its proper historical perspective. What is needed is that a band of young and dedicated scholars be trained in linguistic science, and thereafter placed in an institute solely devoted to:

(a) the survey of all sections of Kashmiri society and all regions of Kashmiri-speaking areas;

(b) collecting and recording a complete database of words,[6] and arranging it in such a way, that the region, frequency of occurrence, the meaning, the synonyms and also antonyms, the section of society in which it occurs or has more frequency, are identified, and

(c) placing it in its historical context, because "whoever wants to establish the etymology of a word must first ascertain all the historical facts available with regard to the place and time of its rise, its earliest signification and syntactic construction, its diffusion, the synonyms it has ousted, etc. Thus, and only thus, can he hope to rise above loose conjectures".[7]

In addition to creating a proper atmosphere for the study of the language, a campaign should be launched to create awareness among the people of the great importance for their mental and intellectual health to use, preserve, develop and popularise, their mother tongue. It has been observed that the loss of the mother tongue results in the retardation of the child's development.[8]

At present, the language and the culture it represents are under enormous stress from the media on the one hand, and on the other, are suffering criminal negligence by the country's so-called leaders, be they political, religious and intellectual. The language has been denied its constitutional rights by the authorities, both State and Central. It will be, if it is not already, facing the prospect of extinction, unless immediate steps to rehabilitate it are taken.

Let not history hold this generation guilty of losing what has been preserved by our ancestors for thousands of years. Let us prove worthy sons of those of our ancestors, whom even Sir Walter Lawrence refers to as "extremely proud and pleased to find anyone who can understand their mother tongue".[9]

Dravidian Features:

With the discovery of the *Burzahom* site, a new insight into the past has been provided, and one can attach some credibility to the view that the term *Dard* may be a corrupted form of *Dravad*,[10] and thus the *Dard* group of languages, to which Kashmiri also belongs, may have to be studied in relation to the Dravidian languages of ancient times.[11] There may be some features still extant in this language which, if studied with proper care and knowledge, may prove as useful as the *Burzahom* site itself. For example, the change of *i* to *ye*, *u* to *wo* in such words as do not originally belong to Kashmiri is a point worth studying in relation to the Tamilian people's pronunciation of 'm' and 'n' as *yam* and *yan*.

Below is the table of words adopted by Kashmiri from other languages, whose initial *i* and *u* is changed to *ye* and *wo* respectively:

i	*ye*	*u*	*wo*
Ilaj	Yelaj	Umar	Womer
Illat	Yelath	Upay	Wopay
Inam	Yenama	Updesh	Wopdesh
Inder raja	Yendraz		
Izzat	Yazath		

Early Foreign Words:

Furthermore, we shall have to find out the historical reasons for the presence of such foreign words as:

Pagah	Dawn (Persian)	Tomorrow (Kash)
Rood	Water (Persian)	Rain (Kash)
Nar	Fire (Arabic)	Fire (Kash)

The words have great frequency, bear no synonyms, occur in all relevant grammatical forms, and are being used by all sections, and in all regions, of Kashmiri.

The word *Nar* (Fire) deserves consideration on yet another count. It is popularly believed to have entered the Kashmiri vocabulary together with the word *Ab* with the advent of Islam, because *Nar* (Arabic) occurs in the Holy Quran and *Ab* formed an integral part of the speech of Muslim preachers from Central Asia. Yet one point needs explanation, and that is, why is it that the word *Nar* enjoyed universal acceptance, although its medium was a religious scripture, while the word *Ab* could not replace 'pony' even among Muslims, who continue to use words like *Pantsadar, Panshuay, Pantyol*, etc.? Does this prompt us perhaps to refer to the historical events that might have taken place in the region,

resulting in the migration of different speech groups which influenced the language?

Vedic:

With *Burzahom* as a clue, we can say that Aryans entered the Valley around 1500 B.C. Perhaps they were speaking *Vedic* or its earlier form. Their interaction with the local population, generation after generation, must have influenced the language of both communities, or perhaps evolved a common language with the structure remaining that of the native tongue, and some of the vocabulary adopted from the migrants. This new form of speech must have gone through the complex social interaction as well, to develop its own moorings, while retaining the essential features of the old form of speech.[12] There is great significance in the observation that "the Dardic languages possess many characteristics which are peculiar to themselves (eg. the change of the medial *l* to *r*, *tm* to *t*, and the retention of a short vowel before a simplified compound consonant). They do not possess all the characteristics either of Indo-Aryan or of Eranian".[13]

Relation with *Sindhi*:

Before entering Dardic areas, Aryans had spread into the Sindh Valley and had influenced the Dravidian in that region as well, but some earlier features remained alive, which bound the Dardic and the so-called *Paishachi* languages like *Sindhi* and *Ihanda* together. Alluding to these features, Dr. Bühler says about the Kashmiri language, "it differs, however, very considerably from all its Indian sisters. Nearest to it comes *Sindhi* ". In his monumental work, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Dr. Grierson has spoken in detail about the relationship of the Dardic languages with *Sindhi*.[14] Here a quotation will suffice. He states: " .... in most of these languages, one of the double consonants was dropped and the preceding vowel was lengthened in compensation. Thus, the Sanskrit

bhuktah (cooked rice) became *bhattu* in *Apabhramsa Prakrit*, and thence *bhat* (one *t* being dropped the preceding vowel being lengthened) in most modern Indian languages .... But the case is different in the Dardic languages and in *Sindhi*. In them one of the double consonants is, indeed, dropped but there is no compensatory lengthening. Thus Kashmiri has *bata* and *Sindhi* has *bhata*. This is a very important point for, as I have shown elsewhere, it goes back to very ancient times .... it must clearly show the connection between *Sindhi* and the Dardic languages."

Family of Dardic Languages:

That Kashmiri continues to preserve the features it has in common with other sister languages of the Dardic group, remains undisputed. The relationship is as it should be, both intensive and extensive. The intensive relationship of the Dardic languages has been discussed by many eminent scholars past and present,[15] yet there is scope for further study by such scholars as are well-equipped with modern knowledge.

The extensive study can be conducted by formatting a complete database of the vocabulary, as already pleaded, and studying it in the context of history, social contacts, cultural relationships and other such factors. I give below a list of words to highlight the point.

A. Some words from Dr. Grierson's list:

English	Kashmiri	Shina	Kohistani	Khowa	Kafur
Shepherd	Pohal	Peyalo	Payal	Pozhal	
Dog	Hun	Shun	Kuchur		
Cat	Bror	Bushi	Pisho	Pushi	
Sit	Beh			Nisheh	
Moon	Zoon	Yun	Yasun		
Foot	Khor		Khur	Khur	
	Pad				

B. Some words from Rughnath Singh Samyal:[16]

Shina	Urdu	Shina	Urdu
Pal	Parhez	Shalak	Phulka
Dino	Anar	Phlas	Safeda
Mogur	Bagra	Shun	Kutta
Kuth	Deewar	Dar	Darweza
Kurtanin	Qameez	Satranji	Darri
Achchi	Ankh	Kattu	Ghutna
Shutto	Gala	Chheeka	Tatti
Snash	Sas	Shyoor	Khusar

Here I would like to note that:

(a) While a dog is called *Hun* in Kashmiri and *Shun* in Shina, *Kuchur* of Kohistani is also not an alien word for a Kashmiri, for when we call a dog, we utter the word "*Kuch, Kuch*" repeatedly. Furthermore, a male pup is called *Kutsur*.

(b) A cat is called *Bushi, Pisho* and *Pushi* in Shina, Kohistani and Khowar respectively. In Kashmiri, the word for wishing away a cat is *Bishta*. The words seem phonetically related, and may be these are semantically related, too. *Bror* for cat is, in my opinion, a later entrant into this language. In its older meaning, the word stands for 'deity', the route of which might be found in *Pali*,[17] because in our folk-tales, we refer to *Savad Bror, Buada Bror* and the tree. The words have religious connotations with *Bhagwan Sidartha* (*Svada Bror*) being the wise one (*Budda Bror*) under the tree.

(c) The Shina word *pal, Parhez* in Urdu, is still extant in Kashmiri, meaning abstaining from eating some food items during the days sanctified by the memory of Saints and Rishis - *pal Heni*.

(d) *Shalak* (Shina) meaning *phulka* in Urdu, may be found in the expression *Shalak kormas* (I beat him) in the context of *Biriyana Karimas* and *Shufta Kormas*, figuratively

meaning the same, *viz* I beat him, but literally meaning "I made *Biriyani* (a food preparation) out of him" and "I made minced meat (a delicacy) out of him" respectively. May be *'Shalak' Kormas* should literally mean "I made an unleavened bread out of him".

(e) The Shina word *Chheeka, Tatti* in Urdu, lives in Kashmiri as the expression "*Su Chhuna Tore Kun Chhikān ti*", literally "he does not even shit towards that side", meaning "he has severed all contacts with those people".

It may be added here that the word for 'wife' in Kafir is *Vyasti*, while the word for 'girlfriend' in Kashmiri is *Vyas*. (Note the elision of *t* in Kashmiri of such words as *Waqt, Sakht*, etc.)

I strongly believe, a study exclusively meant to delineate the complex relationship of other Dardic languages with the Kashmiri, needs to be undertaken by competent scholars.

Nar, again:

Let us revert to the word *Nar* for consideration in the context of history. The word forms an integral part of our speech and bears no synonyms when used the following idioms and expressions:

Nar hyotun	Fire is lit
Nara josh	Warmth of fire
Nara tot	Burn scar
Nar dis	Put it to fire
Nara kangar	Kangri full of fire

Zong is not the synonym, because it has a definite shade of meaning as "fire that destroys", yet we have another word for fire, which has never been replaced, in such idioms as:

Amun	Smell of something burning, particularly cloth
Ama hol	Disfiguring of limb due to fire
Ama taw	Fire (heat) scar

This does suggest that the word *Nar*, as also perhaps *Rood* and *Pagah*, might have found a place in Kashmiri as early as in 521 - 485 B.C. when Darius I of Persia invaded and occupied northwestern India, or even earlier when the Mediterranean migration took place, *am* for 'fire' may have been the earlier word!

This brings us to the point from where we should look at the course of the development of the Kashmiri language in the light of history. In order to facilitate the job, we should remember the chronology of events important to the region and to the language. They are:

1.	Achaemenidis under Cyrus Darius	521 - 485 B.C.
2.	Alexander the Great's invasion	326 B.C.
3.	Seleucos Necator	305 B.C.
4.	Spread of Buddhism	3rd Century B.C.
5.	Brahmin revivalism	5th Century B.C.

The bare recording of the dates and the remote period of time when these took place, should not suggest that the events were innocent and without any intensity. On the contrary, generally such events entail ferocious wars, brutal killings, wholesale destruction, fearful massacres and the uprooting of groups of people, and, because of all or any of these things, there takes place changes in faiths, rituals, habits and behaviours, etc.

"The abundance in which coins of Indo-Greeks, Parthian and Saka Kings of northwestern India were found, until recently, in Kashmir, points to the existence of considerable commercial intercourse, if not actual political connection between the Valley and the principalities of *Peshawar* and *Kabul* in the last two

centuries B.C. and the first century A.D. It is also certain that, in the second century A.D., Kashmir formed part of the *Kanishkas* Empires, and that for at least some generations after the death of that emperor, the country remained attached to the kingdom of Gandhara."[18]

Again, Dr. Grierson observes that "in the true Dardic languages a few Greek words have survived to the present day, such as the Kashmiri *dyar* (plural) for coined money, a corruption of the Greek *dinara*, or the *khowar, drokhum,* silver."[19]

Here I would like to add two more words extant in modern Kashmiri, which may not belong to the Greek language, but to the Greek period. The words are:

Kashmiri	**English**
Yava	a dandy
Yavana Rai	King of *Yavanas,* beloved

We know, through Sanskrit texts, that the Ionian Greeks were called *Yavanas* in this region, and their soldiers, healthy young boys from Greece, looked like dandies in their colourful uniforms.

Buddhism:

Around the third century B.C., Buddhism began to spread in Kashmir[20] with the novel method of preaching through beautiful stories, parables and fables,[21] in their own mother tongue. The religion became popular among the masses, and with the passage of time, Kashmir became a great centre of Buddhist learning and its language a great storehouse of tales and fables.[22]

With this information in view, and also the observation that the Pali language had some relation with the so-called *Paishachi"*, the determination of the extent of influence on the Kashmiri language by Buddhism should be an exciting task for the scholars. I have referred already to the word *Bror* (deity). Maybe *Brang* (the spire

of a Muslim shrine) and *Toop* (the top of a Hindu temple) also belong to this period.

Digression:

As we all know, languages have their own peculiar way of living. These accept/reject/retain words like all other living organisms choosing sustaining foods for taste, for health, for lack of alternative food, and many times, irrationally. To explain this process of rejection and retention, we might take, at random, two words, *viz hār* (cowrie) and *nāw* (boat). Up to the recent past, we used to play games with cowries, and in ancient times, these have been used as money. However, now, they are out of use both as play-things as well as money. Therefore, words like *muanaja ta, nol* and *krand* denoting different types of cowries are fast dying out. But expressions like the following continue to be used with good frequency:

Hara wol	A man with cowries	A wealthy man
Lavi na khand har ti	Has not the value of a broken cowrie	A person of no consequence

Similarly, *naw* (boat) as the only means of transport has lost relevance, and today with super and mini-buses and other wheeled transport available, no-one can perceive a boat as other than a pleasure ride (*shikara*) or a residential boat (*doonga* and houseboat). Even *bahats* (the barge used to carry rubble, stone and other building material) is fast getting out of use. However, *naw* had its heyday, when one had to live and die near the river, and use the boat as the only means of transport.
Hence, expressions such as:

Yārbal	*Nam Syadum*
Yarabal kākani	*Kuana kadni*
Khana khasani	*Yiravani naw gatshhani*
Sha-this lagun	*Nawi walun*

Waw wachhith nāw trawanī	*Nawa neerith gatshhnī*
Oarī gath asun	*Karnaw*

There are other expressions pointing to other means of transportation, also extant, without the actual thing being present now for the purpose. For instance:

Khatī naerun	To learn to trot on the line (like a horse)	To learn the trade
Rathī khasum	To ride a sledge (to reach the destination)	To achieve the objective

The process of acceptance, rejection and retention, is going on at present also, but due to such causes as (a) lack of awareness of the importance of the mother tongue among the community itself, (b) political instability, (c) media impact, and (d) administrative negligence, etc., the process is exceedingly faster than is good for the health of the language. The speed might prove disastrous at the moment, when the community is being increasingly put into political, economic and even social dependence upon other speech communities, particularly Urdu/Hindi and English. The danger of the community getting culturally unhinged cannot be ruled out, unless urgent steps are taken to free the language from all the fetters, rehabilitate it socially, and provide all facilities for its growth, sacrificing for sometime even the so-called superior knowledge available in its rival languages.

Brahmanism:

Let us now revert to history. Around the fifth century A.D. 'a wave of Brahmanic revivalism was aroused, as a result of *Shankaracharyas* preachings'.[23] Accordingly, some Brahmans[24] from the *Konkan* region migrated to Kashmir to uproot the (Buddhist) faith from the Valley.[25] The migrants must have found, so to say, class affinity with the native élite Buddhist clergy, and since Buddha had been admitted into the Hindu pantheon, it was

not difficult for the native clergy to capitulate to Brahmanism and enter into a social relationship with the migrants. In this way, they might have integrated and formed a new class among themselves. Thus, as part of the elite society, and maybe as partners in or usurpers of the state power,[26] the migrants launched a campaign of extermination against the Kashmiri language, in order to get power and influence for their own religious language, which they called by such exalted names as *Mahabhashya* and *Devabani*. With the advancement of time, the Kashmiri language, nurtured and used by the Buddhist *Acharyas* as the medium of religious preaching, fell into negligence and began to be humiliated, being called *Paishachi* - the language of goblins. It got dethroned from pride of place, and began to be considered the language of the low-castes, the 'drunkards' and *'chandals'*, etc. Its wealth of *Jakata* tales was adopted in Sanskrit and presented as originally belonging to the *Devabani*.[27] During these dark days, the survival of the language depended on its intrinsic strength and, happily, it showed that strength, and while accepting/adopting words/idioms, expressions and even, perhaps, structural changes, it continued to retain its ancient base, its original temperament and, to a great extent, its relations with the sister languages of the Dardic family.[28] Nor was traffic allowed to be one way - the Kashmiri language remaining on the receiving end alone. In fact, it showed its great strength by influencing the *Mahabhashya* itself, enriching it and helping it grow into, what is now called, Classical Sanskrit.[29] In the course of time, the new language produced great masters, who have to their credit works of world standard, but let it be noted that it could not be just accidental that most of these masters happened to be either Kashmiri or Kashmir based.[30] In their compositions, they used words, idioms and expressions, from the Kashmiri language,[31] and even adopted the Kashmiri words by sanskritising them to express their thoughts. An indepth study of their works, in this connection, should, I hope, be quite rewarding.

For the present, let us here consider *Rajatarangini* by Kalhan, as translated and annotated by Dr. Aurel Stein.

Rajatarangini:

Before the survey of *Rajatarangini* is undertaken, it should be borne in mind that Kalhan, the author, was deeply committed to the Brahmanic Cult and practised *Varna-Ashrama*. He divided even the Brahmins into prohits (whom he considered ignorant and ill-tempered) *Kayasthas*: ("No-one can be ungrateful, if he be not a *Kayestha*", *Rajat*) and the Brahmans who took part in politics, military conflicts and literary pursuits. He despied the Kashmiri language and called it "the vulgar speech fit for drunkards".[32] He composed in Sanskrit instead of in Kashmiri. But with all the hatred for his mother tongue, he could not help drawing inspiration from the cultural *milieu* he lived in, and using the words, idioms, expressions, phrases and proverbs, current in the people's tongue. In order to get the full gamut of the influence the Kashmiri language wielded on Kalhan, I wish some scholars with the following attributes, would undertake a study of *Rajatarangini*:

(a) An historical perception of the different grammatical forms of the Kashmiri language and vocabulary;
(b) knowledge of Sanskrit - its rise and development, and
(c) a scientific outlook and methodology without any emotional attachment whatsoever.

I shall, however, follow Dr. Stein in highlighting the influence of the Kashmiri language on *Rajatarangini*.

The word which we come across first of all is *khar*, a particular measure of weight.[33] The word is still extant in Kashmiri, but during the Mughal/Pathan period, it was changed to *kharbar (kharwar)* meaning 'a donkey load'. The word has been used with *khari* as pronounced in *Rajat*, and some scholars hold that the word belongs to the *Vedic* Age.

Shankarvarman, son of the great Kashmiri King *Awanti Varman*, would not speak "the language of gods among men (ie. Sanskrit), but used vulgar speech fit for drunkards, which showed that he was descended from a family of spirit-distillers".[34] We know that Kalhan is not well disposed towards *Awanti Varman* and his descendants. Whatever good the king has done has been attributed to the god, *Annapati*, who had taken the mortal form in *Suyya*. The great king belonged to the low-caste of wine-distillers (*Kalpla*), and created posts in the government with designations such as *Dvira*,[35] and *Ganjavāra*,[36] both words, notes Dr. Stein, belonging to non-Sanskrit origin.

(Has this prejudice against the king and his clan got something to do with the power struggle which might have been raging between *Malamasis* and *Banamasis*, as we witness it later between the *Rishis* and the local élite on the one side, and the imposter *Syeds* and their followers on the other?)

Shankarvarman's son, *Chakravarman*, took two girls *Hamshi* and *Naglata*, who were sisters, to his harem and made *Hamshi* the chief queen. He bestowed on their father the ownership of a village. Since *Ranga*, the father, belonged to the low-caste, the officer in charge would drag his feet in preparing any document. On this, *Ranga* became enraged and shouted at the *Pata Adhyayan*:

"You, son of a slave, why do you not write .... *Rangas (Av) Hilu Dina*?"

I have taken the liberty of adding the word *Av* in the Kashmiri sentences, for three reasons:

(a) There have occurred interpolations/deletions and even mis-readings in the original manuscript of *Rajat* at the hands of the copyists;
(b) Dr. Stein himself has used conjecture and discretion in reading and preparing the extant master copy; and

(c) the sentence will bear meaning only when this word is added to it.

Kalhan uses a Kashmiri idiom: *Nov sheen Galan pranis Sheenas* (Fresh snow dissolves the older snow) two times, ie.,

"As snow dissolves snow so took one the sin of the other"
and
"The sordid gains he put into the treasury (which was before) quite pure, destroyed the previously accumulated (treasures) as the (fresh) snow (destroys the former)."[39]

Kalhan describes the long beard of a noble in *Harsadeva*'s court as a sheaf of grass which description is, notes Dr. Stein, purely Kashmiri.

Kalhan has, also, used the Kashmir words *wozum*[40] (debt) and *turay* (a kettle drum) and has attempted to sanskritise many words like *kangar* as *kasthangari-ka*, and *wopal hak*, a kind of wild cabbage found in Kashmiri forests, as *utpalsaka*.

Above all, Kalhan honestly uses the language of a Kashmiri woman, when rendering the harangue of a piqued *Suryamti* against her husband, the King *Ananta*. Dr. Stein has translated it in the following words:

"This pauper, mendicant, idiot, whom fortune has deserted, who has grown old to no purpose, this fool does not know where and what to speak.

He who had before nothing to cover himself with when getting out of his bath, the people here know what he has not lost when he got me.

Whatever you have said of me, that is true of your own female relatives. This is the time to practise penances. Why do you not do it?

It might be said: he is useless, past his time, turned out of the country by his son (now) his wife too leaves him. This, indeed, is what I am afraid of."[42]

Here I venture to put it into Kashmiri to show that Kalhan himself was only translating his thoughts from the Kashmiri, his mother tongue:

یہ شکس لد اُمس چھ پزی مغز ڈلہ متر۔ زن چھس دِدھ
وُژھمژ۔ یہ چھُ بڈتھ بژیٹھیو مُت۔ اُمس چھُنہ یہ تام پانس تادِ زکتھ
جایہ کژھ کتھ پزکرِ ذ۔
تھاوودِ ذ۔ یہ زانتھ نا۔ شژانہ پٹھ تام اوسے نہ جوران۔ تہ چھ
سارنے خبر زمیانہ پنہ ژوٗلے شکس۔
وُچھ کیاہ دوٗنے اُمتے۔ پانس چھے ناکانہہ۔ یہ پُنیو یہ تمنے
یمہ چھے۔ یہ گوژھ آسن وُذ کبس دَیہ دَیہ کران۔ تتھ کتھ کن لوگن۔
یہ چھسے لوکہ پامن کھوژان۔ دَتن یہ چھُ نکھ دوٗتھمُت مرنہ دادِ
دہ دریومُت۔ گہ ڈژھن نیچوی وَتن ویلائے کرتھ تہ دہ ذ دیتس
کولیہ تہ دَغا۔ اوَے چھم زنگہ گنڈنہ آمژ۔ بوزتھ کینہہ!

Before I conclude, I want to state that this unhealthy attitude of the Kashmiri sanskrit authors towards their own mother tongue created, in the course of time, cultural destabilisation, which resulted in the loss of confidence of the people in their genius. Everything that was found good, useful and aesthetically sound was thought to have 'come from outside', and anything ugly, vulgar and inferior, was taken as native. This attitude was taken advantage of by our subsequent oppressors, who slandered and maligned us only because we would not submit to their domination.

Even today, there is no dearth of people - literate, semi-literate and illiterate - who would prefer anything coming from outside, language included, and flaunt it brazenly as a token of modernity. They are bothered little about the universally accepted fact that religion without a cultural base is like a branch of the tree without roots, and that knowledge and higher learning can never, repeat never, be acquired, but in one's own mother tongue.

Some such pseudo-intellectuals hold that the suffix *vor* in placenames, like *Buchhivor, Batavor,* etc., is a corrupted version of Sanskrit *vihar.* The statement is not only erroneous, but misleading as well, for those who have no knowledge of Kashmiri.

In the following chapter, I hope to discuss the placenames as identified by Dr. Stein in the context of Kalhan's *Rajatarangini,* but I want to say, here and now, that *vor* is not the corrupt form of *vihara,* but an important and frequently used Kashmiri word, with many grammatical forms, carrying a definite meaning as 'settlement, abode, place of living'.

In this connection, I would ask you to consider the following:

(a) When a girl is married and sent to her husband's home, it is hoped that *Sua kari vor tati* - 'she will settle there'. Her maiden home is now termed as *Malyum* (belonging to the father) and her new abode is designated as *Variv* (place of settlement).

(b) *Vor* has *var* as the feminine diminutive in the saying *Kasheer chhe reshi var* - 'Kashmir is the abode of Rishis'.

(c) (i) *Vora ....*
..... Moj ..... mol - boy, and *beni* which stand for stepfather ..... mother ..... brother and ..... sister respectively might have been expressions of respect and affection, which denoted an elderly lady, a gentleman, a lad and a girl of one's settlement;
(ii) *Nana vor* .... meaning a person who roams about without any covering (shoes, etc.) on his feet, might have meant a person without any fixed abode, a tramp; and
(iii) *Wāgaj vor* .... denoting a tenant, a person having settled temporarily or for some fixed period of time in a residential place belonging to another person, might, in earlier times, have stood for a person, living temporarily in a settlement not belonging to his own clan;

(d) There are phrases like the following which also confirm the real meaning of the word:

Vara asun	To be (in the state of having) settled
Vara rozun	To remain (in the state of being) settled
Var yun	To settle without any anxiety
Varay chhukha?	Are you settled (in peace)?
Bevar karun	To unsettle (a person mentally)
Bevari karni	To put into the state of being unsettled
Vara vara	In a settled manner
Vara kara	Settled and working

* * * * * * * * * *

REFERENCES

1. *Linguistic Survey of India* by Dr. Grierson (L.S.I).
2. Shaw as quoted in L.S.I.
3. Bloomfield in *The Language.*
4. Dr. Stein should serve as an example.
5. "In countries over which a speech community is recently spread and settled, the local differences are relatively small as, say, in the U.S.A. or Russia, in countries that have been long settled by the same speech community the local differences are much greater as in England and France." Bloomfield.
6. "Though Kashmir is small, it is large enough to boast of more than three dialects." Sir Walter Lawrence.
7. Otto Jespersen in *Language.*
8. "A study of similar cases in Wales, where the children of Welsh-speaking parents shift to English, seems to show that this process retards the child's development." Bloomfield.
9. Sir Walter Lawrence in *The Valley of Kashmir.*
10. The present author in *Identity of the Kashmiri People.*
11. "A single Dravidian language, *Bruhl* (with 174,000 speakers) is spoken, far off from the rest in the mountain of Baluchistan, it seems to be a relic of a time when Dravidians occupied a much wider territory, before the invasion of Indo-Aryan and Iranian speech." Dr. Grierson.
12. "It (Kashmiri) so clearly reveals the manner in which the new cases of the declension have been formed from the old bases, a point which in other languages is exceedingly difficult." Dr. Bühler.
13. Dr. Grierson.
14. Dr. Grierson in L.S.I., Vol. III, Part I.
15. Dr. Grierson. ".... the aspirated sonant consonants *gh, jh, dh, dh* and *bh.* In the Dardic languages, these letters do not occur, but are always dis-aspirated sonants, *viz.* by *g, j, d, d* and *b* respectively. L.S.I.
16. The R.N. Singh Samyal in *Shina-Gilgit Ki Zuban.*

17. I am personally inclined to believe that *Pali*, the language of the southern Buddhist Scriptures is a literary form of the ancient languages spoken at *Takshasila.* This accounts for the striking points of resemblance between it and *Paishachi Prakrit.* L.S.I., Vol. VIII, Part I.
18. P.N.K. Bamzai in *History of Kashmir.*
19. L.S.I. (Dr. Stein is totally wrong when he suggests the route of the Kashmiri *Dyar* being Kalhan's *Dinars.*)
20. *Nagas* were the first inhabitants who were initiated to Buddhism by the monk, *Madhyantika.* Dr. Saria Khosla: *Buddhism in Kashmir.*
21. "Possessing a shrewd wit and a telling humour, he (Buddha) drove home his ideas by means of entertaining fables and tales. His disciples adopted this method of preaching and almost every popular story in northern India .... to the number of five hundred and fifty .... was adopted by the Buddhists and collected after the death of the great reformer." Edward Wright in *Introductory Essay* to the World's Thousand Best Short Stories, Vol. 1 & 2.
22. In the opinion of Dr. Knowles (*Folk-tales of Kashmir*), "Kashmir as a field of folklore literature is, perhaps, not superseded in fertility by any other country in the world".
See Note 17.
23. P.N.K. Bamzai in *History of Kashmir.*
24. "The origin of Brahminism in the Valley of Kashmir is unknown, but there is clear evidence to show that many of the noted Brahman inhabitants of Kashmir, were descendants of Brahmans of other parts of India." Dr. S.C. Ray in *Early History & Culture of Kashmir.*
25. Dr. Saria Khosla: *History of Buddhism in Kashmir.*
26. "The Brahmans did not appeal to the people, but aimed at overthrowing their rivals by winning over Kings, and inducing them to drive the Buddhists from India at the point of the sword. And to gain the favour of the men of royal rank, they used some of the stories they took from the Buddhists, in compiling a work of statecraft, known as *Hitopdesa.*" Edward Wright.
27. "With a view to combating the growing influence of the new sect, the Brahmans stole some of the best tales and made a book of them entitled *Pancha-tantra.*" Edward Wright.

28. "But nevertheless, some of the commonest words .... that are retained the longest in any language, however mixed, and that are seldom borrowed, such as the earlier numerals, or words for father', mother' and the like .... are closely allied to the corresponding *Shina* words and are, therefore, of *Paishachi* origin." L.S.I.
29. "Kashmiri and Sindhi are two ancient dialects which have helped in the development of the Sanskrit language." Dr. Bühler.
30. "I understand that some very orthodox pundits may grumble, because they find there (in *Katha sarit sagar*) a not very respectful attitude of *Somasdeva* to Brahmanical institutions."
31. *Chenku* for 'female organ' by *Mammatta* and *Ujam (Wozum)* by the author of *Lokprakasha*, etc.
32. Thus the king who did not speak the language of the gods (among men, ie., Sanskrit), but used vulgar speech (*Apabhramsa*) for drunkards, showed that he was descended from a family of spirit .... distillers.
33. Approximately 74 kg weight.
34. *Rajatarangini*, V, 206.
35. Dr. Bühler, as quoted by Dr. Stein, considers it a Sanskritised form of the Persian word *Dabeer* (دبیر) meaning 'Secretary'.
36. Benfey, says Dr. Stein, claims the word having Persian origin and meaning Custodian of the Treasury - گنج ور
37. *Rajatarangini*, V, 397-98, meaning Ranga has been granted (the village) *Hilu*.
38. *Rajatarangini*, V, 401.
39. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 565.
40. *'Ojjamdhana'. Rajatarangini*, VIII, 75.
41. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 1881.
42. *Rajatarangini*, VII, 441-44.
43. اگر قحط الرجال اُفتد از اینہا اُنس کم گیری
اول افغان دویم کنبوہ سویم بد ذات کشمیری

III. Wrong Identification of Fictitious Place-names given in *Rajatarangini*

Now, I am sorry to say that Dr. Aurel Stein has been greatly misinformed .....

I examined the same Pundit Mukund Ram to whom Dr. Stein alludes. He must have found out previously what Dr. Stein wanted and gave him the name of the ruined temple as *Vainyaswamin*, probably to please him and not impossibly to get some tip from him.

J.C. Chatarji *
(June 1905)

*Former Director, Archaeology and Research Department, Jammu & Kashmir Government

WRONG IDENTIFICATION OF FICTITIOUS PLACE-NAMES GIVEN IN *RAJATARANGINI*

Introduction:

In the previous chapter, I have made an attempt to establish the antiquity of the Kashmiri language, and have shown the influence of this language on the writings of Sanskrit authors in Kashmir as identified by Dr. Stein. In that chapter, I referred to the suffix *Vor* of Kashmiri place-names, and disputed its being the derivative of the Sanskrit word *Vihara*. In the present paper, I intend to speak about such place-names as are, in my opinion, derived from the Kashmiri language, but have been identified as the place-names which occur in *Rajatarangini*, either due to ignorance of the language or any other reason.

Before actually dealing with the subject, I think it appropriate to mention the following:

1. During the Holy Relic agitation (1964), when the place-name *Hazratbal* was being mentioned almost daily in the World as well as the national press, a friend of ours came up from Uttar Pradesh, and admonished us for not pronouncing the place-name as *Harzat-bāl* (in the context of the Holy Hair of the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, having been lodged at the place). He would, on no account, accept our explanation that the suffix *bal* in Kashmiri is an entirely different word from the word *Bāl* in Urdu/Hindi.
2. In *Barzol* near *Majid Bagh*, there is a small locality which has always been called '*Goori Poor*', because of its being the village inhabited, mostly by cowherds. However, with the expansion of the city during the last few years, some city dwellers began to move their homes to the village, and since these 'educated élite' would not like their residential place to be referred to as 'the village of the cowherds', they changed its name to *Gauripora* - in honour of the goddess, *Gauri*. Just the same way, the residents of the

Alamgari Bazar near *Hawal* have begun to call their locality *Alamgir Bazar*.

3. *Lalchowk*, the place-name, was given to the locality in Srinagar now called by the same name in 1947 by the National Conference workers under the influence of the Soviet Bolshevik leadership, who had given this name (Red Square) to a place outside the Kremlin Wall near the Lenin Mausoleum.
4. In *Batamalyun*, a vacant ground was locally called *Kharmaidan*, but the non-Kashmiri officials of the Dogra regime would call it 'Totto ground' in their official documents. Since 1947, while the official non-Kashmiri name got propagated, the original name became extinct.

We can cite many an example to prove that in Kashmir, changing place-names to suit the linguistic convenience of the influential élite have been taking place for a long time now, and even Bakshi Gulam Mohammed changed the name of *Hamal Illaqa* to *Rafiabad* to commemorate the late Rafi Ahmad Qidwai, and *Gyoor* to *Noorabad*, to please the so-called educated people of the place. While there is nothing wrong in giving modern names to the newly developed residential colonies and localities, it is, of course, a crime against history to change the old place-names. This crime committed by pseudo-educated persons, has, alas, gone unnoticed so far and, therefore, we are now faced with grave difficulties in constructing our past history.

In my opinion, this process received its first fillip in the hands of those who were adamant about getting *Rajatarangini* accepted as the ancient history of Kashmir. Since the book lacked credibility as a historical narrative, it became necessary that the place-names given in it be identified on the ground. On the one hand, this act has dealt a fatal blow to the ancient culture of Kashmir, because in due course of time, all other sources of Kashmir history became extinct, due to neglect, and today, we are left with just a bunch of myths and legends as our history. On the

other hand, *Rajatarangini* as a creative literary achievement has itself suffered a setback, because no attempt was made to evaluate and appreciate the poetic genius of its author.

With these introductory remarks in view, let us deal with the theme of wrong identification of fictitious place-names given in the *Rajatarangini*. I am conscious of the fact that the theme is complicated, and made more so by the repeated use of the place-names by innumerable scholars without proper verification. I, therefore, take just a few, and perhaps, more important place-names for analysis.

Let us start with ..... *Pandrethan.*

Pandrethan:

Kalhan says that King Asoka built Srinagari -

"That illustrious king (Asoka) built the town of Srinagari which was most important on account of its ninety-six lakhs of houses resplendent with wealth." (Book 4, V. 104)

But Kalhan does not identify the actual locality on the ground. Later, he says that King *Pravarsen II* built the city of *Pravarpora*, which was nearer to the old capital. This statement clearly indicates that, before the construction of *Pravarpora*, Srinagari continued to serve as the capital. However, Kalhan himself uses the word *Purandhisthan* much earlier in the chapter dealing with *Srethasena* (*Pravarsena I*), who was the grandfather of *Pravarsena II*. The question arises that, when the new capital had not been built in *Srethasena*'s time how could Srinagari be referred to as the old capital? Dr. Stein himself wonders at such a mistake on the part of Kalhan and remarks -

"If we are right in deriving the name of the locality (*Pandrenthan*) from the fact of its having been the site of the old capital, Srinagar, founded by Asoka, the use of the name *Purandhisthana* in this passage (ie. Book 3, V. 99) is a kind of

anachronism, as the foundation of the new capital *Pravarpura* on the site of the modern Srinagar is attributed by *Kalhan* to *Srethasena*'s grandson, *Pravarsena II.*"

However, despite this 'anachronism', Dr. Stein insists on identifying *Pandrenthan* as *Purandhisthan* and, in this connection, he categorically states that "the identity of *Pandrenthan* with the site named as old capital is proved by ample evidence". Then he puts forth the evidence:

1. (a) It is indicated in the gloss of *Rajatarangini*, and
   (b) is still known to Pandit tradition.
2. *Srivara* speaks of the road from *Samudramatha* (*Sudramar* near Second Bridge) to *Purvadhisthana*. It is clear that by the latter designation he refers to the present day *Pandrenthan*, and
3. The name *Pandrenthan* is the direct phonetic derivative of *Purandhisthana*.

This is the 'ample evidence' put forth and let us examine it *seriatum*.

1. (a) The old gloss of *Rajatarangini*, which Dr. Stein refers to, is the Ms. prepared by Takade Bhatta Harka in 1682 A.D. In this gloss, the following words appear:

   "*Pāmydrathan iti Prasiddhe grame*"

   Please note that the word is *Pānydrathan*. The significance lies in the prefix *pāmy*, which, we know, is a derivative of *poni* or pan.

   (b) Dr. Stein should not have relied on the so-called pandit tradition, as he himself has elsewhere remarked (*Ancient Geography of Kashmir*) that "no reliance can be placed on the alleged tradition which General Cunningham had adduced as the sole proof of his location .... Further, he says the tendency to explain local names by their apparent relation to names of Kings, real or imaginary, continues to influence popular tradition in Kashmir even to the present day."

These remarks of Dr. Stein should apply in the present case as well.

2. Up to the time of *Srivara*, the word *Purandhasthana* should have lost its meaning and fossilised into a place-name. Therefore, *Srivara*, if he had actually meant to identify the locality, would have used the same word, which would have served the double purpose of giving both meanings, ie. the old capital as well as the place-name. But, instead, he uses the word *Purvadhisthana*, which in no way was intended to identify the locality.

3. (a) Is *Pandrenthan* really the phonetic derivative of *Purandhisthana*? It needs to be examined. It may amuse you to note that Dr. Elmslie "holds the view that *Pandrenthan* is the phonetic derivative of *Pandu Daryudhan*, father of *Pandus*".[1] However, rejecting this funny 'view' of Dr. Elmslie, which only betrays his crass ignorance of Kashmirology, let us first identify the locality on the ground itself.

Pandrenthan is a locality on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. On the right side of it flows the river *Veth* (Jehlum) and on its left is a steppe mountain. Nearest to it are two villages, *Athwajan* and *Pantachwak*. Since the locality is surrounded on the one side by the river and on the other by the mountain, there is a very small strip of flat land, where not even one thousand houses could be built, not to speak of "96 lakhs of houses resplendent with wealth". It is incredible that this locality could hold a population of 38,400,000 (thirty-eight million, four hundred thousand) souls, if we reckon that each house was occupied by just one couple and their two children. Even if we include comparatively vast areas from *Badam Bagh* on the one side and *Sempore* and *Phrestabal* on the other, together with the villages, *Khrew* and *Zewan*, it would not be possible to create such a city as huge as mentioned by Kalhan.

(b) The earliest manuscript of *Rajatarangini*, referred to as old gloss by Dr. Stein, calls it *Pamydrathan*, and as already noted, the important part of the word, for our consideration is *pāmy*, meaning 'water'.

(c) There are two more localities near *Pandrenthan*, which begin with the syllable 'Pan', and they are *Pantachwak* and *Pampur*. Because of the nearness to the river, we shall have to take note, like the old glossator, of the syllable 'Pan' in all the three localities, since we have other place-names as well starting with the 'Pan' syllable, like *Panzath*, *Pandech*, etc.

(d) Such huge volume of building material or mounds has never been discovered, which would indicate the existence of such a big city, as has been claimed; and

(e) Kalhan himself does not provide any clues which would help us in identifying either Srinagari or *Purandhistan*, which would even remotely lead us to any conjectural identification.

With this in view, are we not justified in concluding that both A. Cunningham, and Dr. Stein are incorrect in identifying *Pandrenthan* as *Puranadhisthanna*, which occurs in *Rajatarangini*. To my mind, therefore, Dr. Stein's tongue-twisting exercise in finding the phonetic derivative is futile.[2]

Pandrenthan is not derived from Sanskrit *Purandhistan*, but in fact is a Kashmiri place-name, *Pāmydrathan (Pandrenthan)* like other such place-names in its vicinity, *Athwajani*, *Phrestabal*, *Kadalbal*, etc.

Panpur:

While discussing the genesis of the place-name *Pandrenthan*, I made mention of another place-name, ie. *Panpur*. Kalhan, in *Rajatarangini*, says that one of the ministers of King *Jayapida*, named Padma, founded the city of *Padmapura*. Where was this city built? *Rajatarangini* does not provide us with any clue.

However, describing a battle which took place in the *Padampura* city itself, during the reign of Jayasimha, Kalhan mentions two village names. One is *Kheritalasisa* and the other *Udipapurabala*. This mention of two villages in the vicinity of *Padmapura* could have provided us with reliable clues in identifying the place called *Padmapura*. However, Dr. Stein himself, while holding the view that *Padmapura* is the modern *Panpur*, says that he has not been able to locate the villages called *Kheritalasisa* and *Udipapurabala*, even with their phonetically changed names. How does he, then, expect us to accept Kalhan's *Padampura* as the modern *Pampur*, when:

1. Kalhan himself has not identified the place;
2. those two village names which Kalhan mentions in the vicinity of *Padmapura*, do not exist on the ground;
3. Kalhan does not mention the village, *Pantachowak* (which unfortunately, is now being called *Panth Chowk*). This place-name is linguistically very important, and the village is located in the neighbourhood of *Pandrenthan*. Instead Kalhan mentions such place-names in the vicinity of *Padmapura* as are non-existent.
4. taking the 'pan' syllable as the basic part of the names, we have *Pandrenthan*, *Pantchwak* and *Panpur*, like a string of identical place-names. Does this not save us from entering into a dubious phonetic exercise, where at one place we have *Purana* to be treated as *Pan*, and at another place, *Padma* to be accepted as such.

Tapar:

If you agree with the above, then let me venture to say that like *Panpur*, *Tapar* and *Sopur* are also purely Kashmiri place-names, neither of the two derive their names from *Rajatarangini*'s *Pratapapura* and *Suyyapura*. *Tapar*[3] is located at an elevated place, where it gets more sunshine than the villages around, and therefore, the place is designated, 'village of sunshine'. The word

is still extant in Kashmiri, and one of our contemporary poets, Professor Rehman Rahi, has used it with the same meaning in his 'Kashmir University Hund Tarana':

'Preth Tapur Tsèuh yeti Bamburi Gath'

Furthermore, the inscriptions on the foundation of the temple unearthed at *Tapur*, mention its erection by *Parmanudeva*, son of Jaya Simha (1155-1165),[4] which proves, if any proof is necessary, that there was no trace of any constructions prior to this date, and certainly nothing during the time of *Pratapadatiya* and even Kalhana himself.

Now, let us turn to the place-name, *Sopur*. At the outset, I should remind you that the place is not called *Sopore*, as we spell it now, but *Sopur*, by the local population.

The identifiers of the place-names occurring in *Rajatarangini* claim that the town was founded by *Suyya* during the reign of *Avantivarman*. Before we give our comments in agreement or otherwise, we should turn to the text of *Rajatarangini*.

Kalhan says that during the reign of *Avantivarman*, *Annapati* took the incarnation in the person of *Suyya* and performed miracles. By his divine power and wisdom, he drained the valley of the flood waters, thereby exposing new land, which helped in producing more grain, thus ameliorating the condition of the people.

Was *Suyya* really an historical personality or merely a fictional character? Let us leave this question for future investigation, and attend here to such points as are relevant to our theme.

Kalhana says in Book 5 of *Rajatarangini* .....

1. On the bank of the Vitasta, where she leaves the waters of *Mahapadma*, he built a town resembling heaven, which bore his own name (V. 118).
2. After bestowing on Brahmans the village called *Suyyakundala*, in honour of (his mother) *Suyya*, he

constructed (the dyke called) after her name, *Suyya Setu* (V. 120).

3. On the lands which he raised from the water, thousands of villages, such as *Jayasthala,* etc., were founded by *Avantivarman* and others (V. 121).

These are the three *slokas* pertinent to our theme, which we will now examine.

1. When Kalhana mentions the names of a village and a dyke, called *Suyyakundala* and *Suyyasetu* respectively, he explicitly says that the names of both these places were kept after the name of *Suyya*'s mother and not himself. On the other hand, the town which he built "resembling heaven" has not been called by Kalhan, *Suyyapura.* It is for the first time that *Takade Bhatta Haraka* (1682) writes the place-name *Suyyapura* in his manuscript. It may be noted here, that no other manuscript, which was not copied from the *Harakas* manuscript, mentions this designation.
2. A. Cunningham identifies Kalhan's *Shurapura* as our town *Sopur.*
3. Bühler, after a visit to *Sopur,* categorically states that the town "does not resemble heaven and possesses nothing ancient except its name".
4. Dr. Stein notes that, while *Jonaraja* has mentioned a village name *Suyyakundala* near *Vular,* he himself has not found any village bearing this name. Furthermore, he says that it is possible that the name had been entered into the manuscript of *Ratanakantha* and also in the Lahore manuscript by mistake.
5. No place, nor dyke, nor even a bridge, bearing the name of *Suyyasetu* has ever been located anywhere in the locality.
6. Which are the thousands of villages which were founded by *Avantivarman* and others on the land exposed by the miracle performed by *Suyya*? Kalhan himself gives us just one name, *'Jayasthala'. Takade Bhatta Harkara* mentions this name in the shortened form *'Jithan'.* But neither *Jayasthala* nor *Jithan* have been located anywhere so far.

With all this in view, and also the fact that there can be more than one opinion about the historicity or otherwise of the person called *Suyya,* how can one accept that the place-name, *Sopur,* does not belong to the category of such place-names as *Panpur* and *Tapar*?

The question may be asked that, since Kalhan himself says that "on the bank of the Vitasta, where she leaves the waters of *Mahapadma,* he built a town ...". Does this statement not explicitly indicate the location of the town? Yes, it does, but then we have to see whether by *Mahapadma* (lake), Kalhan really meant the lake we call *Vular.* This, in other words, mean that we need to identify the *Mahapadma* lake as it appears in *Rajatarangini,* and earlier in *Neelmatapurana.*

Before entering into this area of investigation, I would request you kindly to pay attention to the fact that Kalhana spent his whole life-time near the seat of power because he had been the son of a courtier. Call this seat of power by any name: *Srinagari, Puranadhisthana* or *Pravarpura,* but in any case, it was somewhere in the modern Srinagar city. While living in the city, Kalhana nowhere mentions the most beautiful spot on earth,, that is Dal Lake, which forms a part of the city. He does not mention any of the lakes, like Nigeen, Gili sar, Anchar sar or Manasbal Lake, which are in, around or near Srinagar. True, he describes the enchanting beauty of the lotus and its petals, but the places where this beauty radiates its glory are nowhere mentioned or described by Kalhana.

He does mention *Mahapadma* Lake, when dealing with the reign of King *Jayapida,* and says:

> Once the king was addressed in his dream by a person who bore divine appearance and had his hands folded in supplication. "O King, I am *Mahapadema,* the Naga prince

residing peacefully in your dominion. A Dravidian sorcerer wishes to lead me away from here, in order to sell me for money in an arid tract requiring water. If you protect me from him, I shall show you in your own land a mountain which contains golden ore."

Having learnt this, the King found the sorcerer and asked him about his intentions. After a promise of safety, the sorcerer confirmed what the King had learned in his dream. The King was astonished and asked the sorcerer: "How can you drag out that very powerful Naga from the depth of the lake, which extends over many Yojanas?"

The sorcerer replied: "Incomprehensible are the powers of magic. If you wish to see them, come and you will suddenly see a wonder."

Then, he went up close to the lake, followed by the King, and after closing all the quarters (by magic formulas), dried up the water by means of arrows discharged under (proper) spells.

Thereupon, the King saw wriggling in the mud a human-faced snake, a span long, together with many other small snakes.

That (sorcerer) said: "O King, I can take him now reduced as he is under the spell." But the King held him back with the words: "You must not take him."

Then, upon the king's orders, he quickly withdrew the force of the magic spell, and the lake resumed its former state, spreading out again in all directions.

Now this was, according to Kalhan, *Mahapadma Naga*, after whose name *Mahapadma* lake is called. However, Kalhan does not mention here or anywhere else, the actual locality where this lake could be found. He only dramatises the myth, as it appears in *Neelamatapurana*, with the intention of projecting his own convictions regarding Fate, *Dharma*, etc.

Well, it is not possible to identify the area where this lake could be found. In the absence of any such identification by *Rajatarangini* or *Neelmatapurana*, it does not seem right to identify it as *Vular*.

Joneraj in his *Rajatarangini*, mentions that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin built an island in the *Vular* Lake and called the island *Zainalank*. *Joneraj*, whilst clearly identifying the lake, does not refer to it as *Mahapadma* Lake, but as '*Ullola*'. The question arises, what is the actual name of the lake? Certainly not *Mahapadma*. Dr. Stein has the following to say about the word, *Ullola*, which *Joneraj* gives as the name of Vular Lake:

"Sanskrit *Ullola* can be interpreted as 'turbulent' or 'the lake with high-going waves'.

Yet it is impossible to dismiss altogether the suspicion that the name which seems wholly unknown to old texts, may be only a clever adaptation of the Kashmiri *Vular* or its earlier representative."

At another place, where Dr. Stein finds *Mahatmayas* referring to *Holada*, a *pargana* in *Madvarajaya* as the *Vular Pargana*, he comments: "It is certainly curious that in the modern *Mahatamayas*, we meet with *Ullola* also as a name for *Vular Pargana*, the genuine ancient designation of which is *Holada*."

Considering that .....

1. *Mahapadma* Lake has been mentioned in *Neelmatpurana* and also in *Rajatarangini* in a mythical vein,

2. actual identification of the lake on the ground has not been given in either of the two ancient books,
3. *Jonaraj* refers to *Vular* Lake by the name of *Ullola*, which according to Dr. Stein could be the adaptation of the Kashmiri *Vular*, and not *Mahapadma*,
4. the *Mahatmayas* create more confusion by misnaming *Holada* a *pargana* in *Madvarajaya*, as *Ullola* .....

How shall we convince ourselves, let alone others, that *Mahapadma* as it appears in *Rajatarangini* is actually the lake we call *Vular*?

Maisum:

I have already said that Kalhan makes no mention whatsoever of Dal Lake in his *Rajatarangini*. However, Dr. Stein speaks about this lake when he tries to identify the place which, in *Rajatarangini*, is called *'Maksikswamin'*. According to Dr. Stein, by *Maksikswamin* Kalhan meant the modern *'Maisum'*. Let us refer again to Kalhan and in the light of what he has said, try to verify the claim advanced by Dr. Stein.

Kalhan mentions the place-name, in the first instance, during the reign of *Chandrapida*, when a Brahman woman confronts the King with the plaint that her husband had been killed by another Brahman, who lived in *Maksikswamin*.

The second time the place-name is mentioned during the reign of King *Sassula* is when describing a conflagration.

Kalhan says .....

> 'On the 'great bridge' (*Brahat Setu*) one saw as yet only the smoke that had risen from *Maksikswamin*, rushing like a herd of elephants, when at that very moment (the fire) fell with vehemence upon the *Indradevibhavana Vihara*. Thereupon, the whole city was at once seen in flames.'

While Kalhan does not give us any clues as to the location of *Maksikswamin*, when referring to it, during the reign of *Chandrapida*, he mentions two place-names, *Brahat Setu* (the great bridge) and *Indradevibhavana Vihar*, when referring to it during *Sassula*'s time. If we could locate these two places, the bridge and *Vihar*, we should surely be able to locate *Maksikswamin*.

Dr. Stein, whilst claiming that a bridge could possibly have been erected somewhere on the *Vitasta*,[5] hastens to clarify that he had not been able to locate either the bridge, or a place-name like *Brahatsetu* anywhere in the city. To my mind, his search could not have yielded any result, because, as he himself notes in his paper entitled 'Ancient Sites of Srinagar', there was no tradition of constructing permanent bridges across the *Vitasta* during the so-called Hindu rule. He says: 'Sharaf-ud-Din's notice (*Tarikh-i-Rashid*, p. 431) is of interest, because it shows clearly that down to the end of the Hindu period permanent bridges across the *Vitasta* were unknown in Kashmir.'

Furthermore, *Jonaraj* informs us that the first ever bridge across the *Vitasta* was built by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, and the bridge was called after his name, *Zainakadal*.

Whilst claiming that *Indradevibhavan Vihar* was founded by one of the queens of *Meghvahana*, Dr. Stein concedes that he could not find its location anywhere.

Which leaves us again in the lurch about the identification of *Maksikswamin*.

Despite this, Dr. Stein insists that by *Maksikswamin*, Kalhan meant the modern *Maisum*, because *Maisuma* is surrounded by the *Vitasta* on the one side and the *Tsunty Kul* on the other, thus forming an island. He contends that this island can be identified by referring to other *shlokas* in *Rajatarangini*. In this connection, he lays more stress on an event which took place during the reign of *Pravarsen II*. However, before we turn to that event, let me remind you of the death of *Achala* (110) because .....

"Frightened they cremated him at once on the ground of the island which is at the confluence of the *Mahasarit* and *Vitasta*." (Book 8, V. 339.)

Mar:

Since Dr. Stein holds the view that *Mahasarit* is the original name of *Tsunthi Kul*, therefore, he concludes that the island mentioned in this passage is actually *Maisum*. However, let us note that Kalhan, in this passage, does not use the place-name *Maksikswamin*, but the word 'island' instead, which leads us to the conclusion that the place-name *Maksikswamin* can be identified as *Maisum*, only if we accept *Mahasarit* as the original name of *Tsunthi Kul*.

Now let us turn to *Pravarsena II*, who built the city of *Pravarpura*. *Rajatarangini* (Book 3) records:

'After the conquest of the world, while he resided in the city of his grandfather (*Pravarsena I*), there arose in him the desire of founding a town after his own name.

Once that hero, the sun among kings, went forth at night for adventures, in order to ascertain in a supernatural way the place and the auspicious time (for the foundation of the new town).

The host of the stars, which were reflected on the jewelled points of the king's diadem as he moved about, appeared like protecting mustard-seeds.

Whilst wandering about, he reached a stream which skirted the burning ground and was bordered by trees looking terrible in the light of numerous funeral pyres.

Then there appeared on the (other) bank of the stream, before that powerful (prince) a big roaring demon with upraised arms.

Covered with the red light from the flaming stare of that (demon) the king glowed, like a large mountain which is enveloped by the glare of meteors.

Then, the *Raksasa* laughed and rising, with a loud voice, a terrible echo in all directions, thus addressed that fearless (king):

'Excepting *Vikramaditya* and *Sudraka* who excels in courage, and yourself, O Protector of the Earth, it is difficult to find perfect fortitude elsewhere.

'Your desire, O Ruler of the Earth, will be fulfilled. Come to my side after crossing this embankment.'

With these words, the *Raksasa* stretched out his own knee from the other bank, and thus caused the water of the *Mahasarit* (stream) to be parted by an embankment (*Setu*).

The courageous *Pravarsena* thereupon drew his dagger from its sheath, knowing that the embankment was formed by a limb of the *Raksasa*'s body.

The place to which he crossed over, after having cut with this (dagger) the flesh of that (*Raksasa*) and thus made a flight of steps, is called *Ksurikabala*.

When he stood near, the demon indicated to him the auspicious time (*Lagna*) and disappeared after saying:

'Build (your) town where tomorrow you see the measuring line laid down by me.'"

Now, before analysing the above, I would like you kindly to consider that:

1. *Pravarsena II*'s grandfather was *Srethañsena*, who was also known by the name of *Pravarsena I*. He has not been credited by Kalhana, with having built a different capital city for himself. Instead he was residing in Srinagari, and when Kalhana refers to the capital as *Purandhisthana* during his reign, Dr. Stein considers this lapse of Kalhana's as an 'anachronism'.
2. The present passage, I feel, contains dramatic element alone, and the intention of the author is absolutely not to

record history, but to create a perfect dramatic situation, in which he has abundantly succeeded.

I am inclined to agree with my friend, Dr. Sereblakov, a famous Soviet Sanskritologist, whom I had the good fortune to meet in Moscow, who told me that *Rajatarangini* was full of drama, and we needed a dramatist of the calibre of Shakespeare who would use it as basic material.

In my opinion, the genius of the great poet lies in his creation of such dramatic situations, full of suspense and wonder, but unfortunately, the translators of Kalhana have missed the main import.

Let us now revert to Dr. Stein. In his analysis of the passage, he takes note of the following:

1. The stream 2. The funeral pyres 3. *Raksasa*'s limb
4. *Mahasarit* 5. *Setu*, and — 6. Place-name *Ksurikabala*.

Dr. Stein states that when the King left his capital *Pandrenthan*, he crossed *Takht-i-Sulaiman* hill at *Zeether* and reached the *Mahasarit* (stream), which is now called *Tsunthi Kul*, and which, according to him, served as an outlet for the surplus waters of Dal Lake. Since he believes the island formed by the *Vitasta* on the one side and the *Mahasarit* on the other was used as a funeral ground (*Shumshana*), therefore, he concludes the island should be identified as *Maksikswamin*, the modern *Maisum*. The *Raksasa*'s limb which formed the *Setu* should be taken as the modern 'Soth', and *Ksurikabala* is now called *Khudabal*. (Here Dr. Stein again gives us the phonetic connection of *Ksurikabala* to *Khudabala*.)[6]

In analysing this passage, I feel, Dr. Stein has again followed the wrong track. I will presently explain how I come to this conclusion, but I would ask you to bear with me a little longer. I would have started my journey from *Kadalabal* near *Panpur*, in order to show that, while the embankment (*Sethu*) covers the whole of the *Vitasta*, and also the *Tsunthi Kul* and *Kute Kul* in

Srinagar, how could anyone call only a small portion of it the limb of that *Raksasa*? What about the rest of it which is spread over tens of kilometres?

However, let us start at Zero Bridge, where the *Tsunthi Kul* starts from the *Veth* and flows down to merge again with the *Veth* near *Dubaji* between *Basant Bagh* and *Maisum*. The *Tsunthi Kul* has an embankment on the one side, starting from Zero Bridge up to *Guridaw Kadal*, and again form *Daldarwaza* up to *Basant Bagh*, and on the other side, the embankment starts from the mouth of the *Kul*, goes without any break or breach round the grounds of the Television Centre, Golf Club, S. P. College and to *Maisum*, up to *Dubaji*, where the *Kul* again enters the river.

This clearly shows that the *Tsunthi Kul* has been built to save that particular area from the flood-waters of the river, which because of it, is now formed into an island, and is not merely to drain the Dal of surplus waters. In fact, the Dal waters have been stopped by the embankment from entering into the area and construction of a gate, earlier at *Kuhna Khan* and later at *Nowkhan*, is a later idea. By calling the *Pron Khan* by the appellation of *Kuhna Khan*, it is apparent that the gate was built during the so-called Muslim period, and by referring to the *Nowkhan* by the name of Dalgate, it can be safely concluded that the gate was built in modern times.

Even Dr. Stein does not attribute more than a century to the existence of the gate, and only surmises that it might be old. He says —

'At the eastern end of the *Setu* where it joins the rocky foot of the *Takht-i-Sulaiman* hill, there has been for at least a century a gate through which the *Tsunthi Kul* flows out from the gate. It is highly probable that this gate is very old.' (Stein, *Rajat*, Vol. 2, p. 25.)

If you agree with my submission that the *Tsunthi Kul* was built solely to divert the flood-waters of the *Veth*, then only the area called *Maisum* can be formed into the island. If, on the other

hand, credibility is attached to Dr. Stein's surmise that the *Kul* was built to provide an outlet to the Dal waters from the Dalgate, then not only is that area not (not) formed into an island, but instead it would be turned into a swamp by the over-flowing river, because the area is not very high above from the river-bed; this fact can be verified even today merely by looking at the height of the embankments.

So, if a small place of eastern embankment from the *Nowkhan* up to the *Berbersha* area could be termed the *Raksasa*'s limb, how shall we call the other (western) embankment of the same *Kul*, which covers the whole length of the *Kul* without any break from Zero Bridge up to *Dubaji*? Dr. Stein has no answer to the question.

Then, Dr. Stein goes on to show us the phonetic connection of *Ksurikabal* > *Khudabala*. However, this is of no value, as we can see even today, that the place is situated in a rather low area which in Kashmiri is called *Khud*.

Now let us devote our attention to finding the connection, linguistic or any other, of the *Mahasarit* with the *Tsunthi Kul*. I have already stated that the *Tsunthi Kul* starts from the point of the *Veth* at Zero Bridge, and ends at the *Dubaji* point, where it rejoins the *Veth* and, also, that this *Kul* was solely built to save the area called *Maisum* from the flood-waters of the river. At the point of its entry into the river, the lower parts of the city continued to face danger from flooding. Therefore, to avoid this danger to the area downstream, a new canal, exactly opposite the *Dubaji* point, was constructed. This canal, called *Kute Kul*, carries the surplus waters of the *Veth* from *Tanki Kadal* down to *Watal Kadal* where it again enters the *Veth*.

This makes the whole picture clear and amply proves that both these canals, *Tsunthi Kul* as well as *Kute Kul*, were built to save the city from the floods from the river, and that connecting Dal Lake with the *Tsunthi Kul*, is a later accomplishment, because on the one hand, Kalhan himself does not make any mention of the Dal

Lake, and on the other, Dal Lake had its own outlets in the shape of drains and swamps.

Dr. Stein assumes that the *Tsunthi Kul* and, in its north, all the swamps and drains were comprised under the one name, *Mahasarit*, but this is not borne out by the facts. We have seen that the *Tsunthi Kul* was not built to drain the waters of Dal Lake, to the north of it, we have a small canal flowing beneath the bridge of *Nawpora*, which is called *Pawa*,(more accurately Hazratbal Pawa) up to *Brarinambal*. We see such drains (*pawa*) in *Ranivor* also. The *Mar Nallah* was built beyond the *Brarinambal* by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. During the reign of *Amirkhan Jawan Sher*, on the northwestern side of the Dal, another such nullah was built, which is called *Nalai Amirkhan*. This means that, in ancient times, there was no canal, or drain, or swamp, called by the name of *Mar* or *Mari*, or any such word that could be taken as having a phonetic connection with the *Mahasarit*.

Do we find anything ancient in the area called *Maisum*? I think not. On the whole of this island, there is not a single temple, excepting one which was built during the Dogra rule, as is apparent even by its name 'Shri Chandar Chinar Bara Akhara'. This has been a vacant piece of land, divided into orchards and gardens, whose names continue to live to this day in *Kawaj Bagh*, *Chinar Bagh*, etc.[7] All these gardens, orchards, and also the residential colonies, seem to have arisen during comparatively modern times, because the ground there has never yielded even a small stone, a piece of terracotta, or anything that would have established its antiquity. Maybe, the residential colonies sprang up in this area only when *Sher-garhi* was built on the river bank by the Pathans, and the bridge (*Amirakadal*) was put across the river, because people always like to live nearer to the seat of power.

Therefore, it is not possible to agree that *Maksikswamin* is the name of the locality called *Maisum*. We should, in fact, look again to the Kashmiri language for guidance, and pay attention to the second part (ie. *sum*) of the word. In Kashmiri, we have five words

for such an object coming under the general term 'bridge' and they are:

1. *Kadal*, a huge construction which joins the two banks of a river. In earlier times, even shops were built on the sides of the *Kadal*;
2. *Tar*, longish pieces of wood put across a stream or canal;
3. *Sum*, long and sturdy beams of wood put across a river and fitted with flooring;
4. *Pul* — a culvert; and
5. *Zanpa* — a rope bridge (swing bridge in English).

Since *Maisum* is an island, there is every possibility of there having been laid across a *Sum*, which in due course of time became the place-name *Maisum*. There is nothing strange about it, when we have such place-names as *Sum Kachibala, Haji Rathereni Sum, Sumbala*, etc. Moreover, the gender we use for *sum* in Kashmiri is feminine, as is the place-name, *Maisum*, which makes it clear that the original stress was also intended on the word or syllable *sum*.

Dedemar:

In Kashmir, there are numerous place-names which are suffixed by the word '*mar*'. The glossators of *Rajatarangini*, including Dr. Stein, hold that the word '*mar*' is the *apabhramsa* of the Sanskrit *matha*, and therefore, *Dedemar* is actually *Diddamatha*, and *Sodramar, Samudra matha*. In order to verify the validity of the claim, let us first try to find out the meaning of these two words:

Matha (a) (Kashmiri Dictionary) دَرمَرتھ چالہٕ اَکہٕ قسمک مذہبی اُدارٕ

(b) (Feroz-ul-Luggat) مَندَر۔ خانقاہ۔ دَھرَم شالہٕ۔ پاٹھ شالہٕ

(c) (Platt's Hindi-English Dictionary)

The retired hut of an ascetic, a monastery school (for Brahmana prosecuting sacred studies), a temple

Mar (a) (Kashmiri Dictionary) روزَن جاے۔ ٹھکانہٕ

(b) Pt. Anand Koul (in the Kashmiri Pandit) - Abode

Clearly, we can see that the two words have nothing in common, in so far as the meaning is concerned, and while *Matha* clearly indicates a religious quarter, *Kash, mar* has absolutely no nuance even remotely connecting the residential place or (more correctly) the abode with a religious performance or the like. Even if, despite this, somebody is adamant about taking the two words as one and *Mar* as the *apabhramsa* form of *Matha*, one may ask in what capacity did Zain-ul-Abidin build a Hindu temple, which he called after his own name, *Zainamar* (now called *Zini mar*), and who were those *Malechas* who built *Malechamatha* (now called *Malchimar*) for the benefit of the Hindus? Does this not prove, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that *mar* is not the *apabhramsa* form of *math*, and the meaning attributed to it by the compilers of the Kashmiri dictionary, also by Pt. Anand Koul is correct? Even today, we use the word with the same meaning.

Conclusion:

This then carries us to the conclusion that *Dedemar* quarter of Srinagar was not a *matha* for the benefit of ascetics or Brahmans, but a residential place of Queen Didda and her royal consort *Ksemagupta* (who was wholly engrossed by her beauty and earned the appellation of *Didda-Khema*). If that be so, then in the tenth century, the capital of Kashmir would have been located in the same quarter of Srinagar which would include the area around *Gilisar, Hariparbat, Wontabhavan, Vetsarnag, Sowur*, etc. These areas do yield stones, mounds of terracotta pieces, artefacts, etc.,

which would help us in constructing our authentic history, while on the other hand, we find nothing in such places as are incorrectly identified as *Puranadhisthana, Suyyapura* and *Maksikswamin,* etc. The wrong done to Kashmir history and culture by the incorrect identification of place-names is irreparable, since almost the entire genuine sources are either extinct or in the process of extinction, due to neglect, and I have nothing more to add to the lament of Kalhan, the great poet, who says:

'O false reasoning which spreads darkness by its unsurpassed delusions.'

* * * * * * * * * *

REFERENCES

1. *The Valley of Kashmir,* Sir Walter Lawrence.

2. The Kashmiri derivative of Sanskrit Purana is Prani; this forms, with assimilation of initial double consonant, the first part *Pan-* of the modern name. The elision of the second *a* in the assumed intermedi form *P(ur) a n a dethan* is accounted for by the influence of the stress-accent which lies on the second syllable of the modern name. The development of the combination *nd* into *undr* is paralleled by similar cases in other Indo-Aryan vernaculars. The nazalisation of *e* may be of recent date.

3. This strong king, whose glory (*Pratapa*) tormented his enemies, built the town of *Pratapapura,* which rivalled the city of Indra. (Book 4, V. 10.)

4. *History of Kashmir,* P.N.K. Bamzai.

5. According to Katha Sarit Sagar, the river *Vitasta* flows in *Ujjaini.*

6. For the phonetic connection of *Khudabal,* and *Ksurikabala* compare Kashmiri *Khur* Sanskrit *Ksura.* A new popular etymology which saw in *Khur* the word *Khud* (hollow) might have helped in the changes of *Ksuri-Kabala Khudabal.*

7. *Kawaj Bagh, Sheik Bagh, Partap Bagh, Kochhi Bagh, Samandar Bagh, Chinar Bagh,* etc.

IV. *Wontabavan*

According to the evidence of the villagers, many large carved blocks of stone have been removed from this site for temples and other buildings during the reign of the late Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Dr. Aurel Stein

WONTABAVAN

WONTABAVAN is a locality about 10 kilometres towards the north of Lal Chowk, the main bazaar of the city of Srinagar, in the vicinity of the Zinimar quarter. The locality has been identified by Dr. Stein as *Amartabhavan*, the *vihara* supposedly constructed by Queen *Amratprabha* of *Meghvahana*. Kalhan says:

'His Queen *Amrtaprabha* caused a lofty *Vihar* called *Amrtabhavan* to be constructed for the benefit of foreign *Bhikksus.*' (*Rajat*, Book 3, V. 9)

Identifying the *Vihar*, Dr. Stein says *Antabhavan* is actually found as the name of a small village situated about three miles to the north of Srinagar, close to the suburb of *Vicharnag*.

Sanskrit *Amrta* at the commencement of compounds is regularly represented in Kashmiri by *anta*, derived under the influence of the stress accents (*amrta, amata, āmta, ânta*).

Identification disputed:

The identification made by Dr. Stein is not, in my opinion, tenable, because of the following:

1. *Meghvahana*'s historicity has still not been established;
2. A *Vihar* by the name of *Indradevibhavan*, supposed to have been built by another *Meghvahan* queen, *Indradevi*, has been found nowhere.[1]
3. The *Vihars* built by his other queens have been wrongly identified as *Khadaniyar*[2] and *Narvor*.[3]
4. The Sanskrit *Amrta* does not change into *anta* or *wonta* in Kashmiri as claimed by Dr. Stein, but to *Amreth*. The word has been used by Kashmiri poets throughout the last 700 years and is still extant.

After visiting the place in June 1895, Dr. Stein has given us his findings in the following words:

"When visiting *Antabhavan* in June 1895, I found in the open ground between it and the canal called *Lachamakul* (*Laksmikulya*), a ruined site which would well correspond to the remains of a *vihara*. Round a solid mound of about twenty feet in height, whose form and construction distinctly resembles that of a stupa, there can be traced an enclosure marked by large slabs yet in situ. About 30 yards to the east lies a tank-like depression which has retained parts of a massive and ancient enclosing wall. According to the evidence of the villagers, many large carved blocks of stone have been removed from this site for temples and other buildings constructed during the reign of the late Maharaja."

The locality described above by Dr. Stein is not *Wontabavan* but a place about two furlongs (as the crow flies) south of it near *Botashah Mohalla*. Presently, I am living near the 'ruined site' and 'tank-like depression' is just across my compound wall. However, this is not the proper '*Wontabavan*'. The 'ruined site' is locally called '*Kandivur*', and its blocks of huge unnewn stones are still scattered near the site, and have not, repeat not been, used by the people who have built their houses there.

Wontabavan proper:

As has been said, *Wontabavan* proper is about two furlongs towards the north of *Kandivur* across a huge man-made bund over which the *Lachmakul* used to flow. This bund has a 20-feet (approximately) wide breach through which a canal carries the water of different springs, oozing in the locality of *Wontabavan* and above, to the drain of Dal Lake, which now forms part of *Nalai Amirkhan*. Over the breach is a centuries old stone conduit, locally called *Kalib*. Over this conduit, the *Lachmakul* used to flow. The *kul* was in existence as recently as thirty years ago. It was originally brought from the Sindh by King Zain-ul-Abidin.[5]

In the *Wontabavan* locality itself, there are huge plane trees, evidently very old and a mound-like place called *Shamal Teng*.

Everything about the locality, ie. the flowing water, shady trees, scattered stone blocks and *Kuchcha* houses, gives a visitor the feeling of antiquity, and one is nostalgically transported through bygone centuries into the era of glory that was Kashmir. The word *Wontabavan* is clearly the Prakrit of *Awantibhavan*; if my assertion is correct, that the ancient site of Kashmir's capital was located on this plain, full of freshwater springs, away from the danger of flooding, then the great King *Awantivarman* must have kept his abode here, and the place must have been given this name to commemorate him, and not *Amrtaprabha* of doubtful existence.

Scare by Authorities:

Unfortunately, Dr. Stein did not see beyond the 'ruined site' and 'tank-like depression', otherwise his keen and observant eye would have noticed much more, that was of great historical and archaeological interest. In Dr. Stein's time, much of the old glory was there, some above and some below ground. Today, people have come from different parts of Srinagar to build houses in the area, and colonies have sprung up, thus disturbing the surroundings. The building activity has unearthed much of importance, but more often, the pieces have been destroyed by people, either because of their ignorance or because of fear that the discovery of such ancient things, if made known, might lead to the seizure of their property by the government.

It is a pity that in the past, insensitive authorities had created such a fear among the common people, so that they thought it prudent to hide, or even destroy, such artefacts, etc., as would come their way, for fear of inviting bureaucratic hurdles in the normal use of the land.

Even I was advised by some of my friends not to publicise the finds, as there was every likelihood of the authorities acquiring my piece of land (without compensation, perhaps). However, in spite of this, there have remained preserved in the bosom of mother earth certain artefacts and terracotta pieces, etc., which would

throw much light on many, many centuries of the history and culture of Kashmir. I intend to deal with each one of my finds in detail, but first a few words about (a) *Kandivur*, to which Dr. Stein refers as 'a ruined site' which would well correspond to the remains of *Vihara*, and (b) 'the tank-like depression'.

Kandivur:

Kandivur is located in an orchard, previously owned by Raja Opendra Krishen Koul and later by Hajji Noor-ud-Din of *Nowshehra*. The orchard has been divided into residential plots for selling off individually. The site is likely to come within the range of a road, and after a few years, will be obliterated. At present, a part of the foundations of the site is intact, and there are large blocks of unhewn stone scattered around. A big mass of boulders have been shoved away from the site by machinery, to clear the ground for apple trees. However, these are still there in the courtyards and compounds causing inconvenience to the house owners.

It may be of interest to note that there are quite a few ruined sites of ancient times in different parts of Kashmir, locally known as '*Kandivur*'. The huge stone-blocks used in their construction still lie scattered, no-one having put them to any use.

Before progressing further, let us ponder for a moment on the word '*Divur*'. '*Div*' is the ancient Kashmiri word for 'god', and its feminine is '*Divat*'. The word '*Div*' has been used with the same meaning by Alamdar-i-Kashmir Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, when he says:

تِتھ مےٚ وَر دِتہٕ موٚدِہٕ

Its other variant *Dy* is commonly used now and the late Moulvi Muhammad Yousuf Shah, Mirwaiz-i-Kashmir, used the word in his Kashmiri translation of the Holy Quran:

گوڈ چھُس یٚہ کرٲن دٕیہٕ ہِنٛدِ ناوٕ ہستی... بِسمِ اللہ

Divur is a word with the suffix *ur*, meaning the 'abode of god', and *Div-ay* conveys the meaning of congregation or fair at a holy place.

Divat is the goddess of grace and good fortune, and the expressions *Divat-Wasani* (deserted by the goddess of grace and fortune), and *Divat Tulani* (a person divested of grace and fortune) are frequently used to denote a person who has lost such qualities and virtues.

By qualifying the word *Divur* with *Kani* (stone), we distinguish it from the one made of any other material, probably of wood. In contra-distinction to *Kani-divur*, such *Divur* would have been designated *Kathadivur*. The spire of *Kandivur* would have been called *toop*,[6] and that of *Kathadivur*, *Brang*. Both these words, ie., *Toop* and *Brang* are extant even today. The former stands for the spire of a Hindu temple and the latter for the minar of a Muslim shrine, mosque or *Khanqah*.

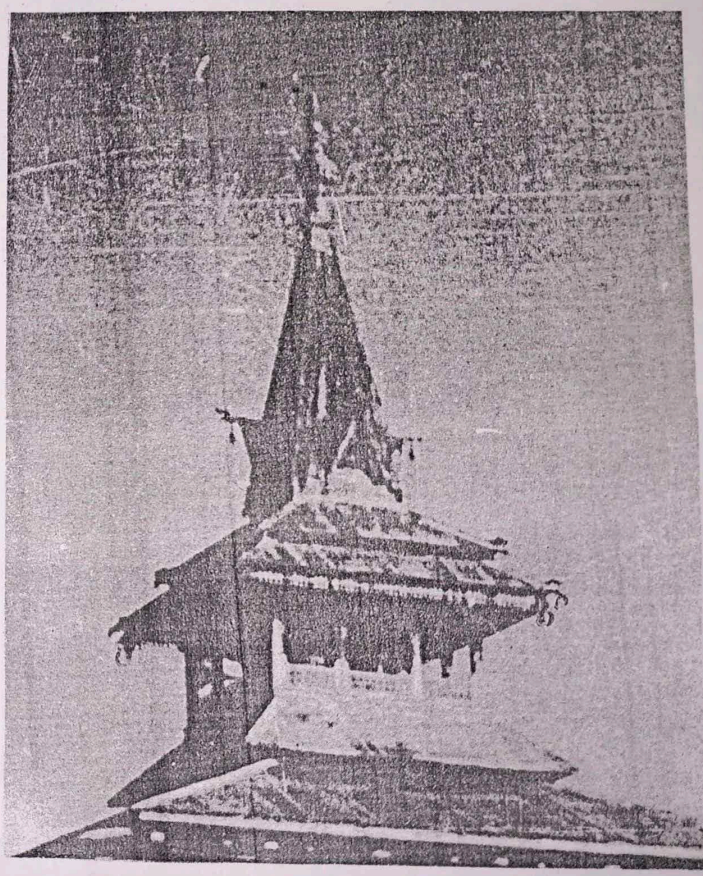
Who demolished these '*Divurs*'?

Was it Muslim fanatics who destroyed these Kaffir temples? If so, to what purpose? Do we rule out the possibility of natural causes having been responsible for the destruction of these stone structures? Could it be that centuries of neglect in maintaining and renovating the sites have played a devastating role, as in the case of Adalat Masheed, the magnificent stone mosque in Hawal. I have no intention of offering apologies for anybody, for I believe politicians, then as now, have been the most irreligious people, who use such propensities of the common people for their own and this worldly advantage. However, the records have to be sorted out. It could only be an inveterate fool who would accept as true the mischievous statement of Mr. Lawrence that 'Shahmir Shah of Hamdan used gunpowder to demolish Hindu temples'.[7] Mischievous, because he surely knew that Shahmir, the King, and Shah Hamdan, the saint, were not only two different individuals, but also lived in two different periods. Furthermore, gunpowder had neither been introduced into Kashmir during the period of

Shahmir, nor during the period of Shah Hamdan, who would anyway not have access to it. I think allegations of demolishing such sites to obtain material for the construction of shrines and mosques are baseless, for two very valid reasons:

1. A Kashmiri believes that any stone that has ever been touched by human hand is a human being turned into stone (*Watasi Gomut*). There are numerous sites in different parts of the valley where such 'fossilised humans' are found. Besides the one near *Aharbal* (Shupiyan), there are, to my knowledge, in the vicinity of Dal Lake, two huge stones, one called *Wagaviwol* (a mat-seller) and the other, *Dwadagoor* (a milk-seller). The superstition is prevalent about the boulders of this *Kandivur* as well as the one near *Hawal*. It is said that a groom, his bride and their guests turned into stones while going towards the groom's village, because one of the guests was a sinful person. Under the influence of such superstition, nobody would and nobody has, even up to this day, put the stones to any use.
2. It is common knowledge that, after the advent of Islam and under the influence of Central Asian craftsmen during the Sultanate period, architecture underwent a change in Kashmir. Stone slabs began to be used for tombs and slate stone for Hammams, while the materials for the construction of shrines, *Khanqahs* and mosques, were mud, bricks and wood. Only rubble stone was used in foundations.

Divari Kani (stone belonging to *Divur* or such kind of stone as is used in building *Divur*) has been used in the construction of *Yarbals* on river banks and near springs from time immemorial, possibly because the places of worship had to be nearer water for the believers to perform ablutions, and in certain cases, other religious rites. Hence the expression '*Divari Kani*', meaning the kind of stone which lends itself to chiselling.



A. ***Brang:***

Wood has, in fact, played a wonderful role in preserving the *brang* of the ancient *Kathadivur* in the spire of Muslim shrines, mosques and *Khanqahs*. The *Brang* has been evolved from earliest times from a primitive pagoda type of roof, and today, we have some fine specimens of *Brang* atop the various shrines, mosques and *Khanqahs* of Kashmir. These have been described by competent writers[8] and I, a layman, cannot venture to enter into descriptions of what I cannot describe, but what has not been noticed so far, and needs to be noticed, is the presence of the dragon-shaped wooden creature on the spires of Muslim places of worship. It is curious that the motif has survived to this day. While it establishes the fact of the *Brang* having been evolved from the *Kathadivur* of olden times, it brings to light our ancient faith in the benevolence of the dragon. We have lost such faith, and also forgotten the existence of the dragon, but the motif remains not only on the four sides of the spire (perhaps guarding against evil spirits), but also in the shape of the handle of the *Samavar* and *Nar* in our homes (maybe for bringing prosperity). The *Brang* provides material for study, which must be undertaken before its ornamental hangings are finally extinct.

B. The tank-like depression:

It has perhaps formed part of the compound of a huge construction. At one end of the site, where, according to Dr. Stein 'many large carved blocks have been removed from this site for temples and other buildings constructed during the reign of the late Maharaja',[9] medium sized rubble stone was found in situ by me, which formed the foundation of a building and not 'ancient enclosing wall'. On digging, this portion yielded burnt wood and pieces of *Gachh* (gypsum) with raised flower designs. Underground clay pipes (*Kalooba*) were found pointing towards the depression through which water from *Lachhmakul* would, perhaps, flow to the tank. Two stone relics, one a blackish grey quadrangular base

(approximately 2 feet square) of a pillar, and the other, a finely chiselled rectangular stone artefact, resembling in every detail a modern wash-basin, were found there, and are still in my possession. These and other finds, like a featherweight clay jar, etc., strongly recommend the site as having been a magnificent construction of medieval period and a place undoubtedly occupied by some Muslim noble. There is strong evidence to show that the *Wontabavan* quarter was devastated and partly de-populated due to the unfortunate confrontation between the Shi'as and Sunnis during the Chak rule, when, as histories record, *Zana Dub* and other such buildings were destroyed by fire. This explains the existence of burnt wood and pieces of *Gachh*, etc., in the area.

Wontabavan neglected:

The place lost its importance totally when the Mughals moved the seat of power to the area around the Hariparbat hill and enclosed their city, *Nagar Nagar* with a wall. From that time onwards, *Wontabavan* fell into neglect and remains so to this day. However, even after so many centuries of neglect, *Wontabavan* did throw up some terracotta pieces, which speak volumes about the evolution of Kashmiri culture and beliefs, and which corroborate the antiquity of our language.

First Period:

When was Buddhism introduced into the valley? — Fifty years or two hundred years after the death of Buddha? I am not able to confirm or deny one opinion or another. However, it seems a fact that Buddhism was a popular religion with Kashmiris and, perhaps, the first religion in the true sense of the word, as against the primitive beliefs in magic and witchcraft. Whether the Kashmiris followed the *Hinayana* or the *Mahayana* sects is not my subject of study at the moment, but one thing is certain, and needs to be noted, is that the belief in Buddha as an omnipresent god prevailed in Kashmir, and he was believed to be living in every human being

(creature?). Therefore, when meeting a friend, we would see (His) *Buth*. By and by, the word *Buth* initially *apabhramsa* of Buddha, began to acquire the meaning of 'face', and is still used thus. Perhaps the earlier word for 'face' was *Shuanda*, which acquired a derogatory meaning after the adoption of the new word. While *Buth Wuchhun* (to see *Budh*/face), *Buth Hawun* (to show *Budh*/face), etc., are respectable expressions for face, *Ath Shuandas Yimay Pazara* (This face deserves to be beaten with a shoe), etc., signify the derogatory connotation of the word *Shuanda*.

Buddhism in Kashmir has been a highly ritualistic religion. Amongst my finds are, besides small earthen lamps, many articles: some cup-like, some shaped and some small containers with lids on. About one other piece, it is impossible even to say what use it could be put to.

However, amongst my rare finds of this period are:

1. *Avalokitesvara:* Bodhisattva is sitting on a lotus which is supported on a pedestal. The figure measures 6½ cm high and 5 cm in width. The Bodhisattva is seated in the *Maharaja Lilasana* pose, with left leg hanging down and the foot resting on the pedestal and the right leg bent and placed in a squatting attitude. The head of the Bodhisattva Padmapana has a halo. The face is elongated and looks feminine. His right arm is bent at the elbow and lifted upwards, while his left arm is bent downwards, and the hand placed on the abdomen. Above the left shoulder is the haloed Buddha seated on the lotus, the stalk of the cosmic flower rises from the body of the Bodhisattva, perhaps from the navel. Near the pedestal below and to the right side of the Bodhisattva is a worshipper, probably a female, carrying burning lamps in a plate. While there is nothing inscribed on the pedestal, some characters in Brahmi script decorate the background of the piece;[10]

2. a Bodhisattva figure standing and holding a staff in the right hand and *Kamandal* in the left. There is a beautiful crown on the head, which is entirely different from the first figure. The whole body of the Bodhisattva is surrounded by a halo, and around it is visible a design suggesting light;
3. fragment of another standing Bodhisattva, the figure is wearing a girdle round its waist and some circular ornament on its left wrist. Also, beyond the design suggesting light, is a beautiful pillar with a square base and circular designs above the base; and
4. a fragment depicts a female face with a diadem on its head. The face is extremely beautiful and the diadem on its head reminds me of Kalhan's description:
"The host of the stars, reflected on the jewelled points of the king's diadem as he moved about, appeared like protecting mustard seeds." (*Rajat*, Book 3, 338.)

Second Period:

Tantra is one of the ancient forms of worship among Hindus, in which the union of Purusha and Prakrati is considered a symbol of creativity. In order to attain *Moksha* (bliss), the worshipper offers the essence of five *Ms*:[11] (wine, meat, fish, cereals and cohabitation) to the deity. The spiritual savant of the cult is called a Koul.

Tantrism was, at times, abused by lustful and lascivious people and we are told of an Indian prince[12] who, with the help of a Koul, practised the rites of this cult in a perverse form.

The presence of Tantrics in Kashmir is confirmed by the terracotta pieces, which I discovered in the *Wontabavan* area. It seems that the depiction of erotic scenes on clay pots was common, and there was no inhibition attached to the use of such pots in homes or at feasts. This explains the presence of numerous pieces of clay pots depicting different postures of man woman love play. It may be mentioned here, that there is a wid

belief that *Ratirahasya* (The Secrets of Love) was written by Koka Pandit, a Kashmirian Brahmin, to please his mentor, *Venudatta*, the King.[13] The work on erotica is popular and goes by the name of *Koka Shastra*.

Amongst my finds are the following:

1. *Nayika* reclining backwards, with her right leg bent at the knee, and the position of her thigh suggesting a welcome response. The *Nayika* is wearing a *Kanawaj* (earring) and *Guado Kor* (anklet). The *Nagrik* bent over her, has his arm around her neck, and his mouth upon her face planting a kiss. The *Nagrik* is wearing a headdress which is not possible to describe because it has now become blurred. The scene is encircled by three rings with dots (flower buds?) forming the fourth circle.
2. *Nayika* lying on her back with bent knee, apparently eager to receive the *Nagrik*, who has his arm round her neck, but the lower part of his torso is still not in position, which is indicated by his leg being straight in a standing posture. The *Nagrik* wears his headdress decorated with a *Shamla* (pointing up in the front), and a *Patka* (hanging down at the back). The scene is framed in two circles with small dots filling the space between them.
3. A fragment of a bigger piece, in which part of the right leg of a *Nayika* can be seen, and on her right arm there is a beautiful *Matsha band* (bracelet) of pearls.
4. A *Nayika* sitting on the thighs of the outstretched legs of *Nagrik*, with her legs placed around his waist, her arms around his neck, and he holding her arms with his hands, with his elbow positioned on her thigh. The headdress (or long hair) of *Nayika* is flowing backwards in a rich and elaborate curl. The scene is framed in a circle which in turn is enclosed by dots representing pearls or flowers.

There are other pieces also depicting the same theme, with

generally become confused, would fumble and would even blush. It would be through sheer good luck that I would sometimes get a word or two relevant to the theme.

However, sometimes I would get amusing answers. For instance, one gentleman told me the following:

'Shall I tell you, *Hazrat*? There is a big stone lying in that orchard, and there is buried beneath it a huge treasure of gold worth crores and crores of rupees. This was told to me by an *Angrez* himself, who had come all the way from *Wilayat* just to locate it. But, *Hazrat*, you cannot just walk in, remove the stone and plunder the treasure, because it is guarded by a deadly *Shahmar* (King Snake), who, if disturbed, will destroy the whole locality. The *Shahmar* will leave the treasure only when *Dajjal*'s[18] time comes, and who knows when that will be!'

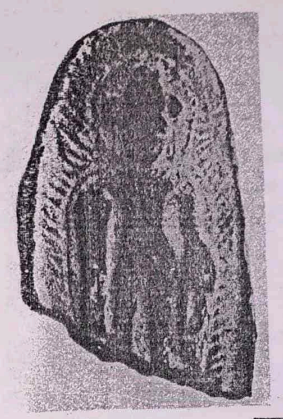
Yet another person had this information to give:

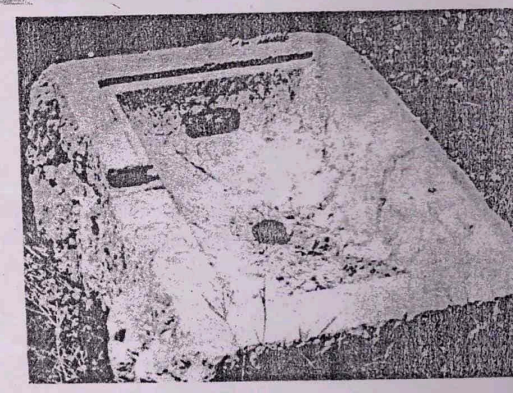
'Do you know what? I engaged two labourers to dig a well. While digging, they discovered a big earthen pot with the lid on. One told the other 'Look here, mate. If we find treasure, we will give one half to the owner of the land, and the other half, we will divide among ourselves.'

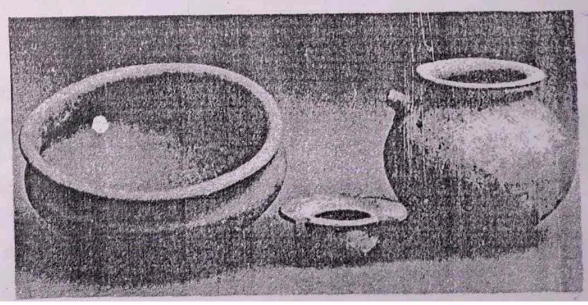
So, after sometime, when I was not present, they dishonestly decided to hide the treasure from me, the real owner. However, you know, God sees even what is in our hearts. Because of their dishonesty, God caused the treasure to vanish.'

I wonder how it happened that Sir Aurel Stein always got the right answers to his queries, or was it that his subordinates prompted the interviewees to say exactly what was palatable to their *Bod Sahib* (the big boss)?

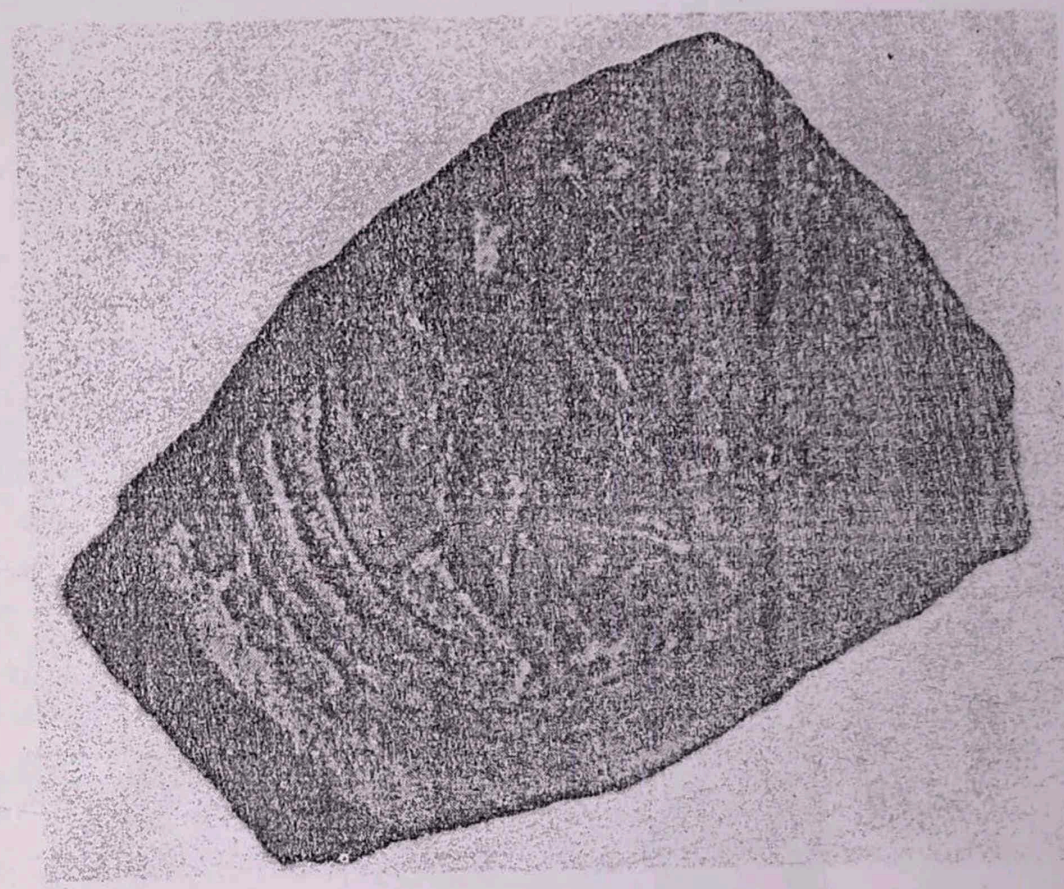
In any case, it needs to be noted that, in Kashmir, much that is blatant yarn has been recorded as history, because of gullibility

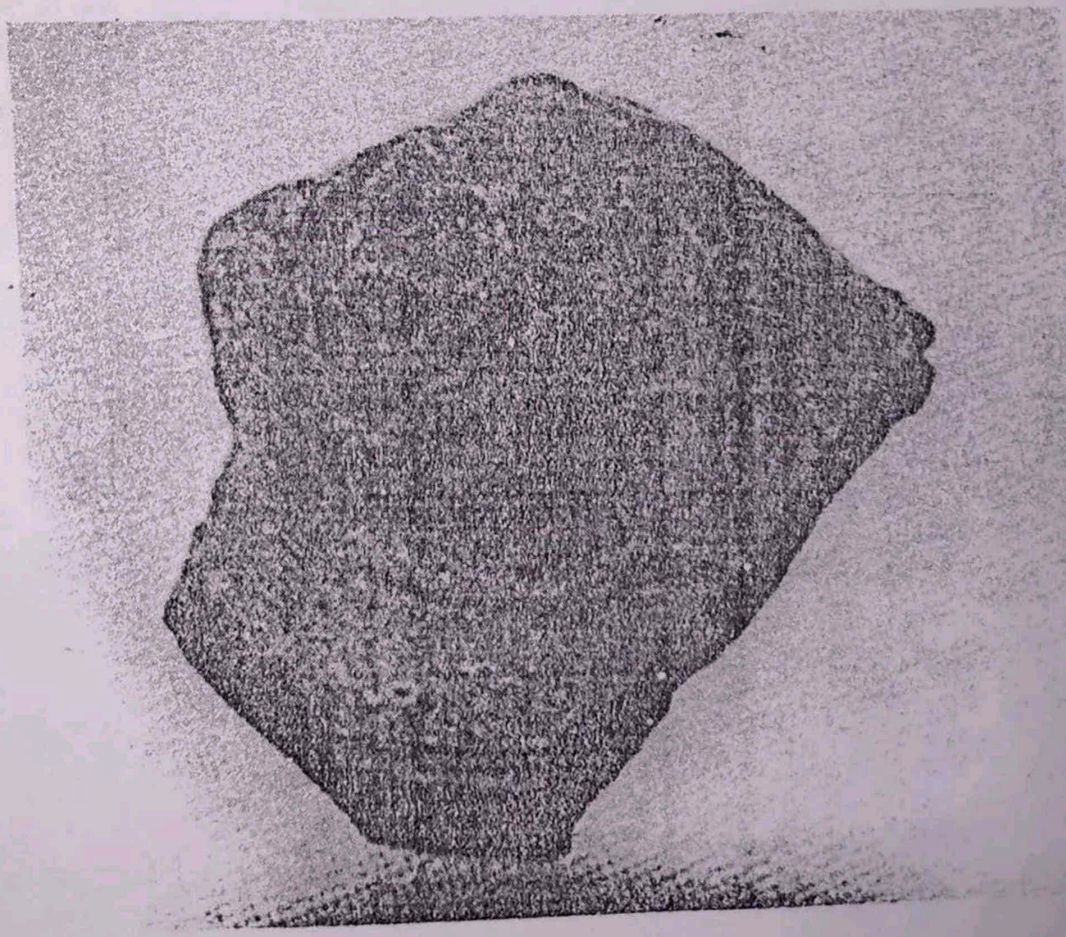




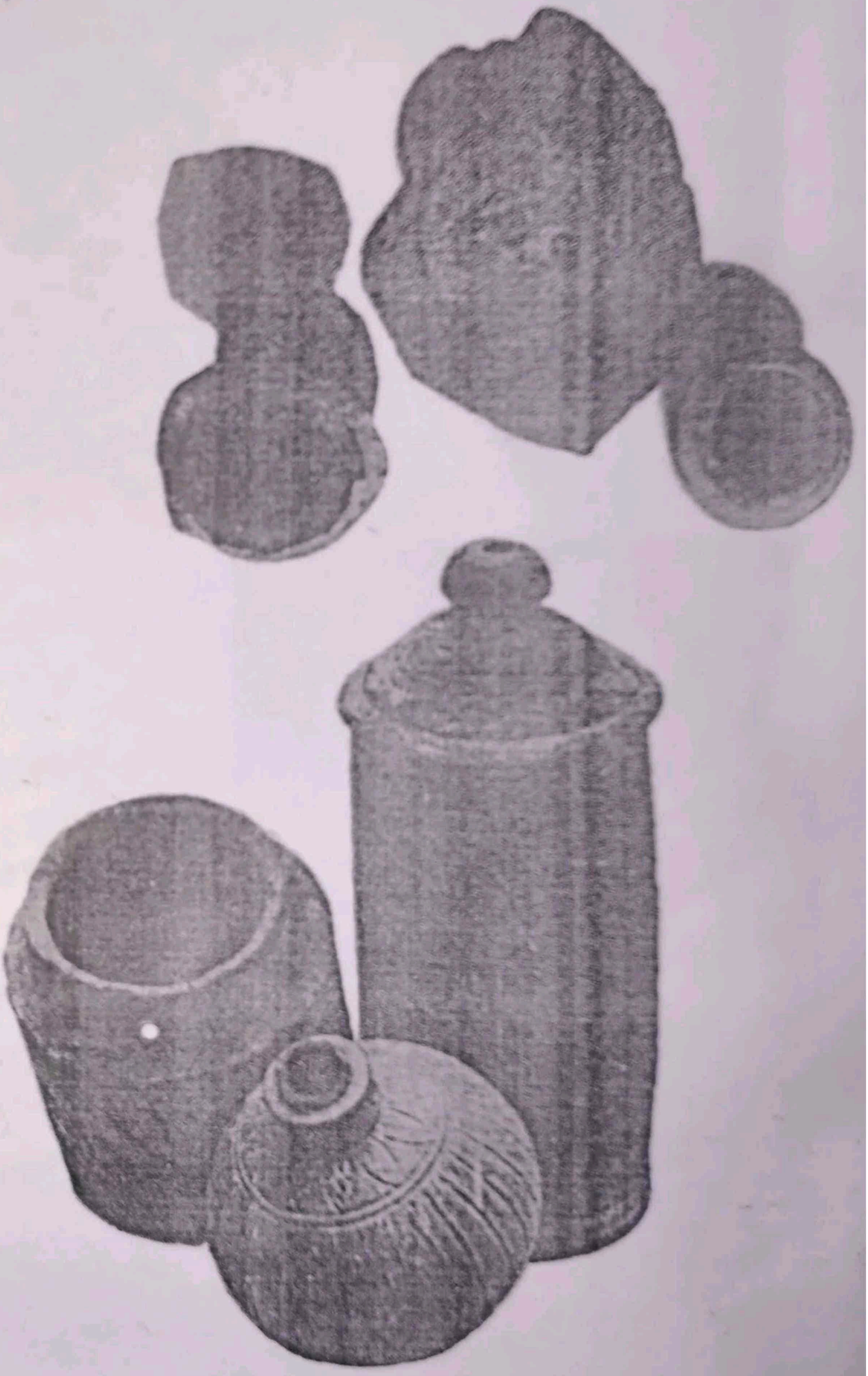


78(i)

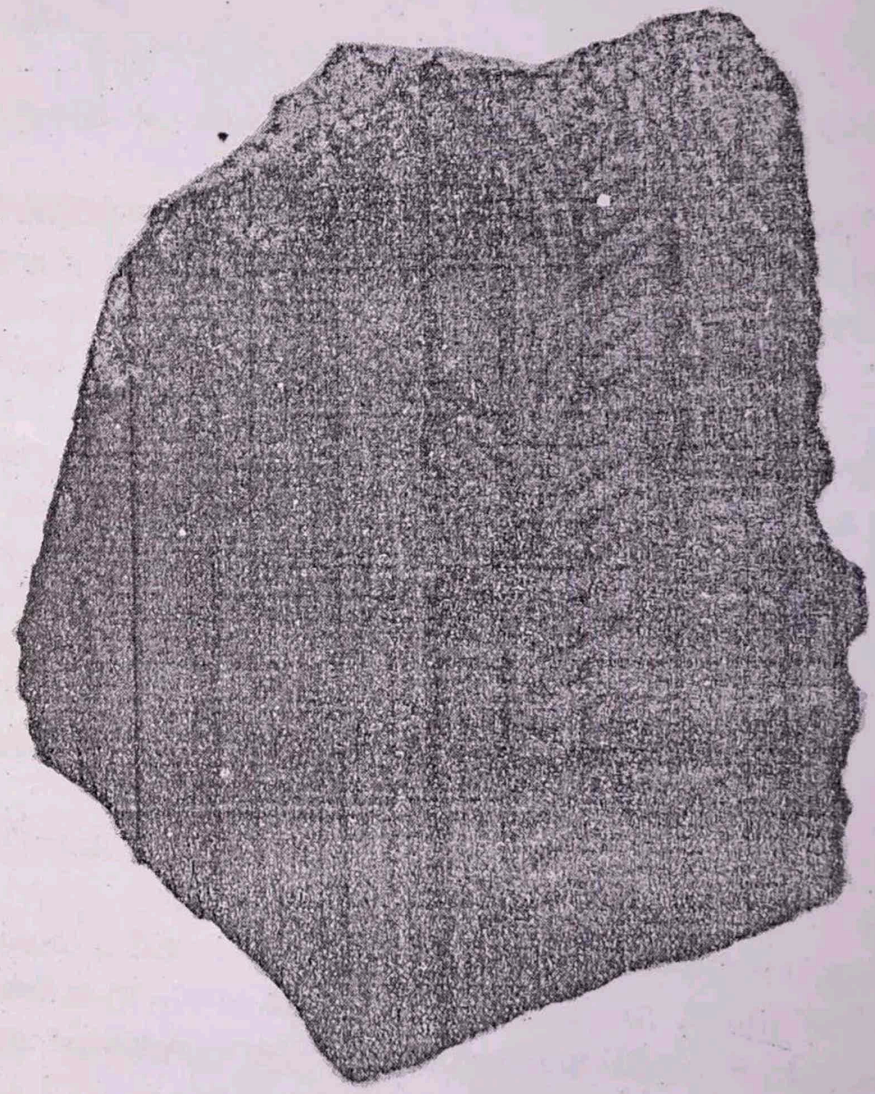




7-8(ii)



78 (iii)



78 (iv)

or dishonesty, and it needs an intelligent student to sift the genuine from the spurious.

* * * * * * * * *

REFERENCES

1. Refer to "Wrong Identification of Place-names" by this author.

2. *Khadanyar* is not *Khadanvihar.* Dr. Stein himself concedes elsewhere that *Yar* in Kashmiri place-names represents the short form of *Yarabal,* which place on river banks had great economic and social importance in the past.

3. *Narvor* is a small locality on the bank of *Nalaimar* (Anchar branch) where a particular kind of grass, *Nar,* used to grow. This grass would grow in the compound of a shrine near *Fateh Kadal,* also, and the whole locality, as well as the Shrine, is known as *Narpeerastan,* erroneously pronounced as *Narparistan.*

4. Note on V. 9, Book 3, *Rajat,* page 73.

5. R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments.*

6. Suleman Toop: The word 'Syleman' seems to be the corrupted version of some ancient Kashmiri word. Takht-i-Sulaiman and Shankaracharya are later conjectural names for the site.

7. *The Valley of Kashmir,* by Sir Walter Lawrence.

8. Nicholls as quoted by R.C. Kak in *Ancient Monuments.*

9. Note on V. 9, Book 3, *Rajat.*

10. *Ye hetu prabhavah hetu tāsām Tathagato hi-avadat*
Tesām yo nirodho evam-vādī Mahā-Śramnahi.

Translation:

The elements which emanate from a cause, their cause the Tathagata (Buddha) has explained.
The great Śramana has also explained the cessation of the cause of such elements.

Script: Post-Gupta Brahmi of 6th-7tyh centuries A.D.
(Deciphered and translated by Dr. B.K. Deambi of the Kashmir University.)

11. *Madhu, Mās, Matshya, Madura* and *Methuna.*

12. *Maharaja* by Dewan Jarmani Dass.

13. *Kama Sutra* by Vatsayan (Introduction). *Venudatta,* the King, is remembered in Kashmiri folklore as *Vanaduth.*

14. *A History of Kashmir,* by P.N.K. Bamzai.

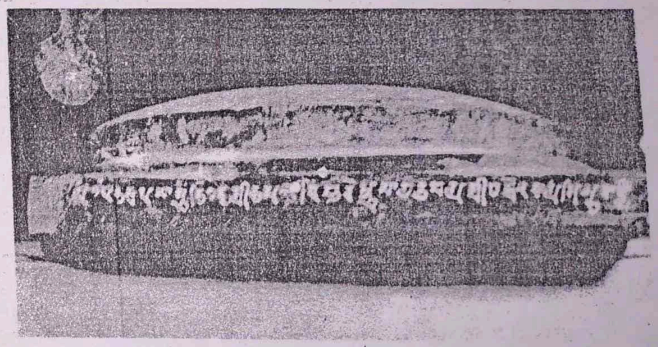
15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. The Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) address on the occasion of his last Hajj.

18. An ill-natured person, who would, according to Muslim belief, take control of state authority some time before the final end comes, and who would try to lure away the believers from the Faith by offering them these worldly benefits.

V. *Wontabavan* (continued)



Inscribed Stone belonging to the Reign of *Jayasimha*

While Dr. Stein was not right, in my opinion, in identifying *Wontabavan* as *Amrtabhavana* as referred to by Kalhan in his *Rajatarangini* (Book 3, V. 9), his description of the ruined site which would well correspond to the remains of a *Vihara*, etc.' is, in a way, correct. The site is, as has already been said, locally known as *Kandivur*.

Recently (in 1986), I found a stone slab, 36 cms square and 3 cms thick, forming the base of a moon-shaped round design. The circular design, 30 cms in diameter, bulges slightly toward the centre. The surface of the whole design is smooth and polished black. It does not bear any image. On the side of the base, there are inscribed the following words in *Sarda* characters:

'OM (SAM) 15 BHADRAPAD SUTI 14 SRI-KAMLA-VIHARA
ACARYA UDAYA SRI CAKRE. JAYASIMHARAJYE'

The importance of this find cannot be over-stressed, as it is the rarest of rarities, because the inscription is dated.

Dr. Stein all along identified the places on alleged phonetic variation of the names of *Viharas* mentioned by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. He visited a place in Srinagar, where he discovered, to his satisfaction, a 'ruined site which would well correspond to the remains of of a *vihara'*. He was, therefore, deluded in believing that the site was 'the lofty *Vihara* caused to be constructed by Queen *Amratprabha* for the benefit of foreign *bikkshus'* and called it *Wontabavan*. He even believed that the '*Wontabavan'* place-name was a phonetic derivative of Kalhana's *'Amrtabhavana'*.

However, the present inscribed stone, found a few yards away from the ruined site does not subscribe to his assertions. On the

contrary, I am afraid, it contradicts him and reduces to naught his exercise in phonetics, which he all along applied in support of his assertions.

Dr. Deambi of the University of Kashmir kindly deciphered and translated the above inscription in the following words:

> 'HAIL. IN (LAUKIKA) YEAR 15 ON THE 14TH LUNAR DAY OF THE BRIGHT FORTNIGHT OF BHADRAPADA (BUDDHIST) SAVANT UDAYA-SRI CONSECRATED THE VIHARA NAMED SRI KAMLA-VIHARA IN THE REIGN OF JAYASIMHA'

Dr. Deambi also calculated the Laukika Samvat 15, finding that it designates the year 1139 A.D., which corresponds well to the reign of *Jayasimha* (1128-1149 A.D.).

This should plainly mean that *Vihara*, which Dr. Stein expects us to believe was *Amrtabhavana*, was in fact *Sri-Kamla Vihara*, and that it was not caused to be constructed by *Amratprabha*, but was erected much later during the reign of *Jayasimha*. And, more importantly, that Kalhan was himself living when the *Vihara* was constructed, and that he had yet to write his *Rajatarangini*, which he did about ten years later. Kalhana has nowhere mentioned the *Vihara*, nor even the event of its having been consecrated, during the reign of *Jayasimha*.

This evidence should be sufficient to prove even to the incorrigible, that Dr. Stein, when identifying the place-names given in the *Rajatarangini*, has wrongly depended on (a) the false reporting of his subordinates, and (b) the belief that his method of deriving present-day place-names phonetically was infallible.

The consecration of this *Vihara* also proves that the area continued to enjoy importance even two centuries after the reign of *Awantivarman*, who, in my opinion, built *Wontabavan*, calling it after his own name.

VI. The Green Culture of Kashmiris

THE GREEN CULTURE OF KASHMIRIS

If we were to fence a plot of land anywhere in Kashmir and leave it untouched for a couple of years, we would find trees growing there without anyone having planted them, and if the fence were to hold, say, for a period of ten years, a veritable mini-forest would appear on the patch of land.

This easy growth of trees in Kashmir has sometimes been irksome, and people have begun to hate some kinds of trees, like *Kikar, Alanitheras*, etc., which just appear and grow, and are there without anyone wishing them to be.

However, this pest-like growth has not left a common Kashmiri negligent of the tree, and he has all along taken full advantage of this benevolence of nature. In the course of time, the tree has become part of his consciousness. The Kashmiri people have accepted the tree as an important concomitant to their socio-cultural development.

In the hazy past, when, it is believed, people practised snake worship and would perform rites near the springs, it is highly probable that trees would be grown at the site, to provide serenity and a mystic atmosphere to the environment. A full-grown tree with lush-green branches does create a misty depth, and the play of light and shade lends a mystical hue to the atmosphere add to this the chirping of birds in the morning and evening, and the noise of flowing spring-water, you will recite with the poet:

مَن خُدا را دیدَم ایں جا بے حجاب

In the third century B.C., when Buddhist religion held sway over the entire population of Kashmir, the tree acquired more sanctity, because Buddha's followers adopted his method of preaching religion under the shade of a tree. This practice was, perhaps, responsible for our belief that anyone lost in the jungle of life was led to the straight path by Buddha, who appears under the tree.

Therefore, in our folk-tales, whenever we find our hero in a fix, we invoke *Svada Brōr, Buada Brōr* (Lord Siddartha, the Buddha), whom we find under the tree (*Os kulis Tal*) to show the correct path, and thus relieve our hero of his misery.

The rise of *Trika Darshan* (Shaivist monism) as an antidote to the cult of object worshipping, gave a fillip to the practice of holding the tree-site as the holy place, as against the stone temple. Since the form of worship among Trikkites was meditation, they would require solitude, which was usually provided by an old tree growing outside the populated quarters. The Savants, known as '*Rishis*', and their followers, would select a tree-site near a stream, and enclose the place for practising and propagating their cult. This place became later known as '*Takiya*'.

The institution of *Takiys*, now extinct, flourished even up to the forties of this century. The *Bab* (Father) used to be the central figure, and his children (the followers) would form his retinue. He would meditate both in the morning and evening, in the hollow tree trunk, or a thatched one-room hutment, and the rest of them (brothers to each other) would busy themselves with planting flowers and fruit-trees for the benefit of all and sundry. The place would be humming all the time, with '*soofiana*' poetry and devotional music, which would adorn it with more sanctity. However, sadly, more often than not, the inmates would be '*charas*' addicts and would shun the temptations of this world.

The institution was maintained by the community as a religio-cultural centre till yesteryears.

It may not be out of place to mention here that, when *Nunda Ryosh* (Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani) uttered his famous saying:

"UN POSHI YELI VAN POSHI"

he was giving, in effect, words to the centuries of experience and accumulated wisdom about trees. *UN* here may not be taken in its limited meaning of 'food', but the vaster meaning of a life

sustaining force, and *VAN* not the jungle (in which a tree loses its identity), but the tree itself with all its glory — natural as well as socio-religious.

With the establishment of the Shamiri Sultanate, Kashmir entered an era of peace and development. The Kashmiri personality began to take a definite shape, and the people's genius began to flower with all its stupendous colours. On the one side, canals, bridges and high-rise buildings, began to be constructed, and on the other, arts, crafts, music, literature and other art-forms, began to be developed, while on yet another side, the importance of the tree began to be understood with more profundity. The tree began to be taken as a source of wealth, and anyone owning trees was considered to be the owner of '*Tameer*'.

Here, it will be of interest to enumerate some of the trees which were grown at specific places for all sorts of purposes.

These trees are:

1. The plane tree (*Boonī*). This tree has always had a special place in the Kashmiri ethos. It would be planted usually at the outskirts of a village or settlement, to provide shade during the summer heat and shelter when it drizzled. Invariably, there would be a small shrine (*Sad Sab*) or a prayer spot (*Namazi Pyand*) under it. This would also be the place where the village fair would take place and a temporary market would be established. The folk-drama players (*Banda pather*) would stage their plays here.
   The plane tree, or any number of them, would even give the name to the locality, as *Boni-bal, Sata Bonayan, Tsari Bonyan*, etc. In order to ensure the cleanliness of the spot, a belief was inculcated, that anyone urinating or defecating under the tree, would be possessed by an evil spirit.

2. Poplar tree (*Frasī*). This tall green flame of beauty would be planted on the roadside, providing shade and colour to

otherwise dreary journeys on slow-moving sledges or mules.

3. Willow tree (*Vir*). Any shallow water-ditch, which would be of little use for agricultural purposes, and much of the space on river banks, and other water-bodies, were used for planting the willow tree. The former called '*Virishat*' and the latter '*Viri Var*'.
   The willow would provide greenery to the village, and winter fodder for sheep and cattle. This tree would also provide fuel for cooking food. The green leaves of the tree were believed to have some medicinal qualities, and its soft sticks would be used as '*Miswāk*' for cleaning teeth.

4. Mulberry tree (*Tul Kul*). Much before people knew the use of this tree for rearing the silk-worm, this tree was planted and preserved to provide berries - the food for the poor and needy wayfarers.

5. *Brimij*. This tree would be planted in graveyards. The colour of the tree, and its petals being dark green, gives it a sad look. Perhaps this is why it was found suitable for plantations in graveyards.

6. Fruit trees. Islam enjoins upon its followers to plant trees - both for shade and for fruit - as an act of continued charity (*Sadqa-i-jariyah*). Under the influence of this edict, Kashmiri *Rishis*, right from Alamdar-i-Kashmir onwards, would plant fruit-trees on roadsides and community lands. They would look after them till maturity, and then dedicate such trees to the community. Anyone wanting to fill his empty stomach or sit under its shade was welcome.
   People believed that as long as one would eat the fruit of such a tree under it or, at any rate, not far from the site, it

was pure (*Halal*) food, but if someone carried the same fruit beyond the site, it would become impure (*Haram*), the eating of which would destroy all the merits of his moral and religious deeds.
This belief was popularised, obviously, to stop people from indulging in senseless or selfish plunder of the fruit.

Probably, it was with the annexation of Kashmir by the Mughals, and the establishment of an administration that was more interested in collecting land-revenues than attending to the welfare of the subjects, that the people lost interest in these activities. However, it may be noted that the Mughals themselves were great lovers of trees and gardens, and it was during their period that the famous gardens were laid, but the fact remains that toward the end of their rule, people lost the sense of belonging and initiative. Consequently, any tree growing activity degenerated into a ritual first and a *Begar* later.

When, due to ignorance which was dishonestly perpetuated by the rulers, all the past is lost sight of, now is the time to regenerate the ethos, in order to create a consciousness among the people regarding the importance of the tree for our ecological and environmental health. It should be mentioned here, that the job of a tree-feller (*Gutyul*), and more so, of the person who digs out roots of such trees (*Khuada Gutyul*) is looked down upon among the Kashmiri people.

END (M7)